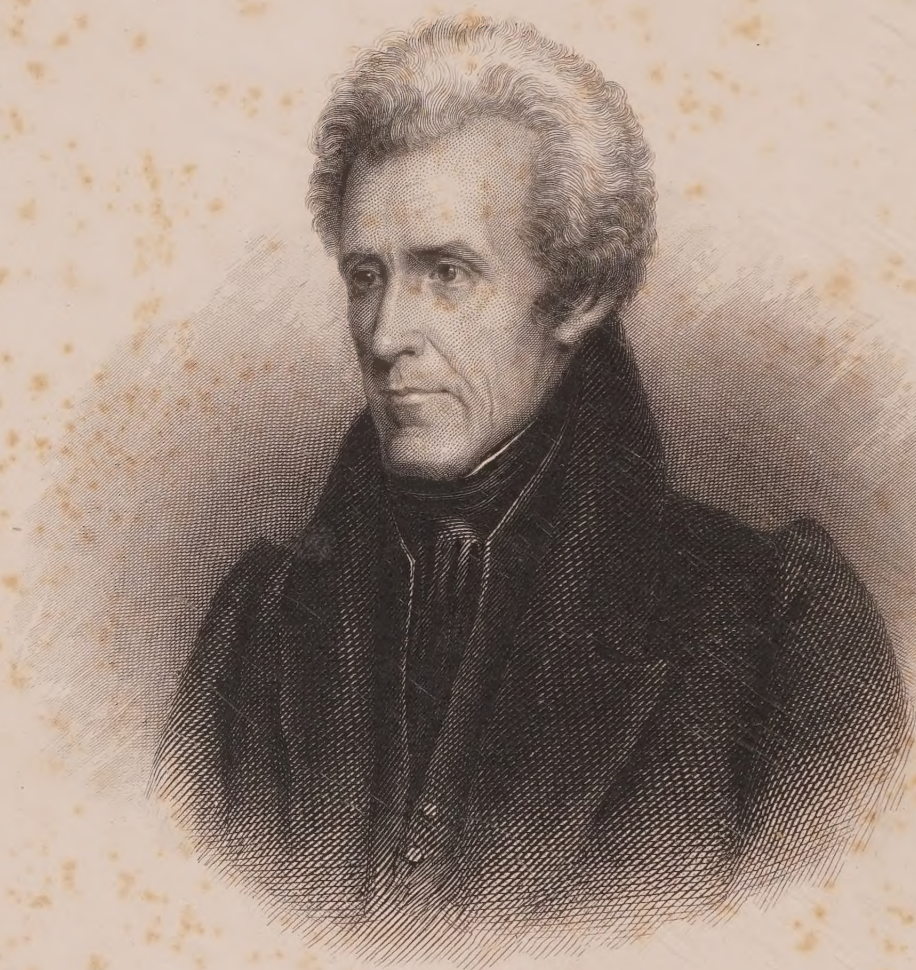


25,879 / B

O. XI 60.



W. Greuthatch, sc.

ANDREW JACKSON.

President of the United States.

59685

ARISTOCRACY IN AMERICA.

FROM THE
SKETCH-BOOK OF A GERMAN NOBLEMAN.

EDITED BY
FRANCIS J. GRUND.

AUTHOR OF "THE AMERICANS IN THEIR MORAL, SOCIAL,
AND POLITICAL RELATIONS."

Why should the poor be flattered?
No : let the candied tongue lick absurd pomp,
And crook the pregnant hinges of the knee,
Where thrift may follow fawning."
SHAKSPEARE'S *Hamlet*, Act iii. Scene 2.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

LONDON:
RICHARD BENTLEY, NEW BURLINGTON STREET.
Publisher in Ordinary to Her Majesty.

1839.



LONDON:
PRINTED BY SAMUEL BENTLEY,
Bangor House, Shoe Lane.

CONTENTS
OF
THE SECOND VOLUME.

PART II.

CONTAINING A SHORT STAY IN BOSTON AND PHILADELPHIA.

CHAPTER I.

Arrival in Boston.—The Tremont House.—The Boston Common.—Aristocratic Exclusiveness of the Higher Classes.—The Massachusetts State-House.—Pathetic Elegy of a Boston Lawyer.—An Independent Gentleman, not a Speculator.—American Aristocracy contrasted with that of England.—The Aristocracy of America continually in contact with the Lower Orders.—Anecdote illustrating the Opposition of the Lower Classes to Aristocracy.—An Aristocratic Patron.—Economy of the American Aristocracy.—Northern and Southern Aristocracy contrasted Page 3

CHAPTER II.

Cross-examination of Foreigners in the United States.—Definition of Common Sense—its high Value in America.—Aversion to Genius.—Sensible reply of a Boston Aristocrat with regard to a Parvenu from the Country.—Ladies buying themselves a Professor.—Boys at school learning for Money.

—A Boston fashionable Concert—Description of the Musicians and the Audience.—High Value of Morality in a Cantatrice.—Dangers of differing in matters of Taste from the leading Coteries.—Secret Police in Boston.—Reflections. Page 28

CHAPTER III.

Maternal Affections of American Ladies — their Cause.—Want of Romance in the Lives of American Gentlemen.—Moral and Religious Cant.—Daniel Webster's Principle of resisting arrogant Innovation.—Reflections on the Democratic, Aristocratic, and Monarchical Forms of Government.—The Bunker's Hill Monument.—Want of Patriotism in the Higher Classes of Americans.—The English Feeling in Boston.—Americans passing for Englishmen in Europe.—Anecdotes.—The American Aristocracy take the House of Lords under their Protection.—Their Contempt for the Western Settlers.—The American Character not understood in Europe . . . 54

CHAPTER IV.

A party of English Gentlemen at Dinner — their Patriotism.—Character of John Bull in America.—The Englishman's Speech.—The American Answer.—Modesty of British Commercial Agents in the United States.—Anecdote characteristic of the Second Society 85

CHAPTER V.

A Literary Party.—The American Press.—Character of Editors—their Rise and Progress.—Influence of Advertisements.—Old and New Federalists.—Mode of operating on the People 109

CHAPTER VI.

Unitarian Preaching.—Dr. Channing.—Character of his Audience.—Religious Party on the Sabbath.—Discussion of

CONTENTS.

v

Dr. Channing's Merits. — Moral Cant. — General Characteristic of New England Society. — Women the only Aristocracy	Page 132
--	----------

CHAPTER VII.

The Nobleman's Journal becomes more and more Aristocratic. — Wistar Parties in Philadelphia. — Literary Gentlemen in Philadelphia. — The Girard College. — Character of the late Stephen Girard. — The Quakers — their Aristocratic Sentiments. — Quaker Dress. — Philadelphia Ladies. — Good Living in Philadelphia. — The Mansion House in Third Street. — Apostrophe to the Fashionable Young Men and to the Men of Family	156
---	-----

PART III.

CONTAINING A TRIP TO WASHINGTON, AND A SHORT STAY
IN THE METROPOLIS.

CHAPTER I.

Journey to Baltimore. — Arrival in the City. — Barnum's Hotel. — The Washington Letter-writer — his Views of Politics. — Arrival in Washington. — Street Manners of the People. — Hotels and Boarding-houses. — High Life in the Metropolis. — The Epicure House	173
--	-----

CHAPTER II.

Corps Diplomatique in Washington. — What a Fashionable Lady thinks of an Ambassador. — The Secretary of the Treasury. — Popularity-hunting of American Statesmen — its Influence on National Politics. — Mr. Woodbury's Hospitality to Literary Men. — Henry Clay. — Thomas H. Benton. — Salis Wright. — James Buchanan. — Extraordinary Dinner-bell. —

Office-hunters in Washington.—State of Finance of the City. —Anecdote of General Jackson and the Office-seeker.— General Character of Washington Society compared with that of other American Cities	Page 201
---	----------

CHAPTER III.

The Library of Congress.—Conversation with several Mem- bers of Congress.—Practice of Public Speakers in Washing- ton.—Van Buren's Method of parrying an Invective.— Discussion of General Jackson's Character.—Jackson and Wellington's Similarity of Character.—Mr. Van Buren's Character.—Instability of American Institutions.—Insecurity of Property the Consequence of it.—Want of Enthusiasm in the Higher Classes.—Their Toad-eating in Europe.—Cooper's last Publication.—Vanity of boasting of the Natural Resources of the Country.—Thin-skinnedness of the Americans when attacked by European Critics.—Toad-eating to the People.— Necessity of establishing a Moral Quarantine for all Americans returning from Europe.—Americans being ashamed of their Institutions.—Anecdote of a vulgar rich American and the Grand Duke of Tuscany.—Democratic Twaddlers.—Advan- tages of a poor Capital	234
--	-----

CHAPTER IV.

A Fashionable young American at Gadsby's Hotel.—A Washington Party.—Description of the Parlour and the Re- fectory.—Apple Toddy.—Introduction to the Lady of the House and to a Fashionable Belle.—The young Lady's Literary Taste.—Mr. Wise.—Grand Distinction between American and English Conservatism.—American Literati.—A regular American Tory—his Rise and Progress.—Mr. Rives.—Mr. Preston.—Mr. Webster.—Pendant to the Old Bailey Speech quoted by Miss Martineau.—Calhoun's Remarks on the Money-mania of his Countrymen.—Webster's Answer and pathetic Conclusion —his giving into Poetry and sinking the

CONTENTS.

vii

Bathos.—John Quincy Adams.—Mr. Forsyth.—Anecdote of an American Anchorite.—A Mazurka danced by four Fashionable Ladies, a Polish Count, and three Members of the <i>Corps Diplomatique</i>	Page 261
--	----------

CHAPTER V.

Drive to the White-house.—Anecdote of Mr. Jefferson and the British Ambassador. — Reception at General Jackson's. — The General's Conversation and Character. — The President's Prayer.—Anecdotes of General Jackson.—Reception by Mr. Van Buren.—Anecdote illustrative of Mr. Van Buren's Tact — his Character. — Character of the American Opposition. — Political Hypocrisy.—Mr. Calhoun.—Mr. Kendall.—Conclusion	302
--	-----

ARISTOCRACY IN AMERICA.

PART II.

CONTAINING A SHORT STAY IN BOSTON AND
PHILADELPHIA.

CHAPTER I.

Arrival in Boston.—The Tremont House.—The Boston Common.—Aristocratic Exclusiveness of the Higher Classes.—The Massachusetts State-House. — Pathetic Elegy of a Boston Lawyer.—An Independent Gentleman, not a Speculator.—American Aristocracy contrasted with that of England.—The Aristocracy of America continually in contact with the Lower Orders.—Anecdote illustrating the opposition of the Lower Classes to Aristocracy.—An Aristocratic Patron.—Economy of the American Aristocracy.—Northern and Southern Aristocracy contrasted.

“ If there ’s a hole in a’ your coats,
I rede you tent it;
A chiel’s amang ye takin’ notes,
And faith he ’ll prent it.”

BURNS.

THE city of Boston, as may be known to many of my readers, is only approachable by water and a long narrow isthmus, called “ the neck.” For this reason it is said to be “ the head of New England;” but the people in the country, who are extremely jealous of the prerogatives of “ the townfolks,” merely call it “ the great metropolis.” When it was first settled, which is more than two

hundred years ago,—for which reason it is termed “an ancient and honourable city,” and the families descended from those settlers “ancient and honourable families,”—it contained, somewhere in the neighbourhood of what is now called “Beacon-street,” three large promising bumps, which however, entirely disappeared as the baby grew older, and are now smoothed down almost to a flat.

The neck forms a large well-paved causeway, lined chiefly with wooden houses, (in the principal streets the buildings are of stone or brick,) and connects the city with the borough of Roxbury, which contains alone above ten thousand inhabitants. Coming from New York, this is the regular entrance to the town; and through it therefore I arrived, driving straight up to the Tremont House. This is a large, massive building with a granite front and a brick back, situated in the most eligible part of the city, and considered as the crack house of the place.

I found the interior very comfortable, and could have procured a parlour and chamber for the modicum of thirty-six dollars (about seven guineas) a week, if an acquaintance of mine, whom I accidentally met at the bar, had not advised me to content myself with a bedchamber, and dine at the ordinary; which, he said, would reduce my

expenses to about one-third, without diminishing very materially my respectability. "Our *first* people," said he, "are satisfied with similar accommodations: they little care how and where they sleep, provided they live in a fashionable quarter; and prefer dining at an ordinary, because at a public table they get more to eat for less money. We are *republicans*," added he, "especially in this city, which is called the *cradle* of liberty."

Not knowing whether he meant this as a satire, I proposed to take a walk with him before dinner, in order that I might have a *cicerone* to direct my first impressions of so classical a place; and accordingly we sallied forth, taking the direction down Tremont-street towards the Common.

"You see here at once the finest place in the whole city," said my *cicerone*; "one which might be enjoyed by all classes, if we had not already outgrown the *cradle*. The people who live in these houses, and who, with very few exceptions, have all been to England, do not like to be seen in public. They hate the arrogance of our grocers and mechanics, who would be apt to stare them out of countenance if they were to show themselves at a public walk. 'Humility,' they say, 'is not the besetting sin of the American

people: on the contrary, the lower classes think themselves just as good as we are; and, what is worse, they *know* that they are our political masters.' This, they argue, is absolute madness, as a man may learn by a single trip to Europe. 'There *must* be a heaven's aristocracy of talent and knowledge, 'as one of our great men* used to say,' and consequently also a hell's democracy of ignorance and prejudice. The latter must not be encouraged in any way, and, least of all, by suffering ourselves to be confounded with it in private or public.'

"It was with the greatest difficulty," continued he, "that our aristocratic inhabitants of Beacon and Park streets† could be prevailed upon to suffer benches to be placed in the Mall. They had two reasons for opposing this popular measure: first, because it encouraged idleness, inducing people who ought to be at work or at home to come here and bask themselves in the sun; and, secondly, because it was possible from those benches either to see the people at the windows of the houses, which would be inconvenient,—or from the windows of those houses to see the people on the benches, which, as the sight of poverty and idle-

* Edward Everett, the present governor of Massachusetts.

† The two streets which face the Common.

ness does not particularly enhance the beauty of a landscape, would be ‘shocking.’ Malicious persons say that there are yet other reasons for opposing the benches; but I could never bring myself to believe them.”

As we were ascending the little eminence on which stands the State-house, we were met by a lawyer, who, learning that I was a stranger come on purpose to see the capital of New England,—the *ideal* capital, namely, because New England is divided into six States, each of which has its own metropolis,—accompanied us, in order probably to become acquainted with my opinions, and in the evening report them to his friends.

For the information of my readers I must observe, that the Boston State-house is a heavy, clumsy piece of architecture, the style and arrangement of which are neither striking nor convenient. I was told that the building was originally intended to be erected on a much larger scale; but that, from motives of republican economy, its wings were afterwards clipped to their present dimensions,—the main body, for which there were sufficient funds on hand, remaining full as large as in the first design. The whole is crowned by a wooden cupola, of such enormous height as not even to leave the possibility of an illusion of its

being made of stone, as in this case the walls would not be strong enough to support it. These are confessions which, in Boston, would not only render me unpopular, but actually expose me to being mobbed ; but, at a distance of two hundred miles, (I write this in the city of New York,) one does feel less afraid of expressing one's opinions and sentiments. The interior of the house contains a statue of Washington, by Chantrey ; a broad staircase ; a large hall of representatives ; and a number of smaller rooms for committees, and the several offices of the departments of state.

“ This house,” said the lawyer, after heaving a deep sigh, “ once the receptacle of a *noble* body of men, is now open to every gingerbread man from the country ; or you would see it built in a different style, worthy of the legislative assembly hall of a powerful republic, like that of Massachusetts ! But the fact is, instead of great men, our house of representatives is now composed of members who advocate ‘ mackerel inspection,’ cider-presses, fences, raising potatoes, and brewing small beer. Having no general ticket, each town or village must send its quota of advocates of its own particular industry ; who, moreover, come here for no other purpose than to oppose the more

elevated measures proposed by the more enlightened members for Boston."

"That is a fact," observed my cicerone; "our *city* representatives wish them all to '*where they don't rake up fire o' nights.*' They have so far degraded their station, that it is now a disgrace, and not an honour, to be delegated by the people."

"And what have they done to disgrace themselves?" demanded I.

"That is soon told," replied the lawyer; "every country member comes here with the determined purpose of opposing *us*, and, above all things, to let the Bostonians contribute largely to the expenses of the State. We pay nearly one-third of all the taxes; and yet we call this *a republican government!*"

"One of equal justice, you ought to have said," interrupted the cicerone.

"As if justice could co-exist with universal suffrage!" ejaculated the lawyer.

"I would pardon all," resumed the cicerone, with a sarcastic smile, "if our country members were to spend the money, which we pay them for lounging about town, in a liberal and gentlemanly manner: but, instead of that, they select the worst boarding-houses, from which they expel our jour-

neymen mechanics, in order to live cheap; and, instead of wine and other liquors, which our merchants and grocers could make a profit of, consume immense quantities of that dreadful stuff which, under the name of ‘New England cider,’ is sometimes placed on our tables, and for which even our *sharpest* landlords dare not make a charge.”

“The positive fact is,” exclaimed the lawyer, “that few of our representatives are gentlemen.”

“And that very few gentlemen will now-a-days consent to become representatives,” added my cicerone, “except it be for Congress; and even that will not last long, if things go on much longer in the way they have for the last seven or eight years.”

As the disposition of the higher classes of Bostonians to ridicule the institutions of their country were known to me, I paid no particular attention to their remarks, which were made as we were gazing on the statue “*of the hero of the revolution.*” I only remember that the lawyer went on in a strain of uninterrupted eloquence, abusing the trial by jury, the vote by ballot, and, *à fortiori*, universal suffrage. “We just wanted that,” he said, “to complete our misery! As if our mob

had not enough power without it ! Our democracy is of the worst kind ; it does not strive for equality, but for supremacy. It becomes at once our jury, judge, legislator, and governor. You dare not act as you please in your own house ; you dare not educate your children in your own way ; you dare not express a wish of your own but what you have to dread to be exposed in public, and have your name paraded in the newspapers. Every man in this city is a spy on his neighbour, a voluntary, unpaid police-agent of the rabble, that pries into all your actions and motives, and is always ready to attribute them to the worst source. And yet we talk of personal liberty, as if such a thing could exist in a republic !”

“ But is the description you give of your townsmen not applicable to all classes ?” demanded I ; “ is it only the labouring classes, or ‘ the mob,’ as you call them, which act as spies to the community ?”

“ We are all naturally a curious, inquisitive people,” replied he ; “ and a cunning one too, because we hardly ever answer one question except by asking another ; but all these faults are increased by the tendencies of our institutions.”

12 THE OWNER OF A FINE BUILDING.

“Have you been less curious or inquisitive before the revolution?”

“Not exactly that; but the inquisitiveness of the lower classes was less troublesome. Our gentlemen were not obliged to notice it; they were not directly responsible to the people; in short, *we* were in every respect more independent than we now are.”

I thought it best not to continue this sort of conversation; so, quitting the house, and walking down Beacon-street, I pointed to a new building which struck me as remarkably tasteful. “Here,” said I, “is quite a stylish mansion! I did not expect to find so much neatness and comfort in this city!”

“It is the mansion of Mr. * * *,” replied my cicerone. “Don’t you think it a fine building? And in the Italian style, too! The owner is one of our richest men,—the son of Mr. * * *, who came to Boston in the year ——. He made all his money in the ——— business, and must now be worth upwards of a million of dollars. He has a very nice family too. His wife was a Miss * * *, daughter to Mr. * * *, one of our most respectable merchants; quite an *intellectual* girl, with plenty of money. I believe she brought him three hundred thousand dollars. Her sister

married a Mr. * * *, one of the most *influential men* in this city. They have been a good deal abroad, and furnished their house in the best style ——”

Fearing that I should be condemned to listen to a long description of the various articles of furniture brought home from London or Paris, and at last to the statistics of the gentleman's property,—a thing which is by no means unfrequent in Boston,—I abruptly changed the conversation by directing my cicerone's attention to an unfinished building, whose enormous height was entirely disproportionate to the small surface it covered on the ground.

“This house,” I said, “seems to be perfectly new; how did it happen that so eligible a site for building remained so long a time unimproved?”

“It was a fine garden,” replied my cicerone, “belonging to Mr. * * *, living in the house adjoining it; but he sold it as a house-lot for the neat little sum of twelve thousand dollars. It's only a small piece of ground, just large enough for two parlours on a floor; but our houses are all three or four stories high, none of us wishing to be overlooked by his neighbour.”

“Did he keep the ground on speculation?” demanded I.

“Bless your soul, sir!” exclaimed he; “do you think Mr. * * * is a speculator? He is a rich man, sir! he does not care for the money; ‘it’s only for the conven’ance of it,’ as the New Hampshire farmer said, when he dunned the gentleman for a bushel of potatoes. Who the deuce would not take twelve thousand dollars for a little garden, scarcely large enough to raise cabbage for the family?”

“Especially in a town where no man possesses anything he would not sell, provided a proper price be offered him,” added the lawyer.

While we were thus talking, we had reached the mill-dam which leads over to Brooklyne, and from which we enjoyed a truly magnificent view of the panorama of Boston. I observed to my companions that their city was one of the finest in the Union; and that, as far as I might be allowed to judge, it could be made a most delightful residence.

“It *was* a delightful place,” replied the lawyer; “but our old families are gradually losing their influence. Most of the fine houses you see here are inhabited by *roturiers*; our society is getting worse and worse every day; and, while we expend

thousands for our public schools, we lose our manners."

"That is a fact," exclaimed my cicerone; "our young men are not half so polite as the old ones; and, what is worse, the influence of family is entirely lost. Our young ladies, for instance, do not value birth and good breeding half so much as money. They would rather marry a woodcutter, if he had shown himself 'clever' in making money, than the son of our oldest gentleman."

"But pray, gentlemen," interrupted I, half impatiently, "why cannot you enjoy the many blessings Heaven has bestowed on you, without being continually afraid of losing your dignity? I have heard more talk about aristocracy and family in the United States than during my whole previous life in Europe. You embitter your enjoyments and pleasures by endeavouring to exclude from them all that come after you; and, in doing so, wound the feelings of many an honest man, who, but for a little more urbanity on your part, would be your friend instead of your enemy. A question of interest which is now agitating the country* may for a moment unite you; but the union is an un-

* The United States Bank and the Sub-treasury system.

natural one, and on that account cannot last. Your state of society is such, that, in the ordinary intercourse with your fellow-citizens, you must necessarily offend more than you can gratify ; and the mortifications which two-thirds of the whole population are constantly suffering from the small portion distinguished from the rest by nothing but success in business, must add to the natural jealousies felt by the labouring classes of all countries with regard to the rich. The distinction between the different orders of society may be more *apparent* in England, — as they are, from historical reasons, with all people of Saxon origin ; but they are, nevertheless, far less offensive than yours.

“ In all countries in which there exists an hereditary, wealthy nobility, there exists a sort of good-will towards the inferior classes which leads to the relation of patron and client, and through which many an apparent injustice is smoothed over by liberality and kindness ; but the mere moneyed aristocracy which is establishing itself in this country, however you may disguise the fact by cunning and soft speeches, or an hyperbolical affectation of republicanism, *hates* the industrious masses over whom it strives to elevate itself.

“The exclusiveness of your wealthy brokers, that hoard money without *spending* it, offends the people without benefiting the artisan or the tradesman; and the meanness with which your first people bargain for every trifle to save a penny, renders their custom scarcely desirable to respectable tradespeople. You are extravagantly fond of splendour, and yet are afraid of displaying it. You must understand me right: I speak of the rich, calculating Bostonians, who really live on their property; not of your wealthy men in New York, who live on nine months’ credit. Besides, you yourself will allow that your aristocracy is far from being generally well educated, and I do not see how this fault is to be remedied as long as wealth constitutes the chief title to good society.

“Your aristocracy, therefore, has not the power of dazzling the lower classes with that air of self-possession and dignity by which gentlemen of rank are at once recognised in Europe. On the contrary, the manners of your rich people in their intercourse with less successful aspirants to fortune are markedly coarse and vulgar, in order, I believe, to give the latter to understand that they are sufficiently *independ-*

dent—that, I think, is the word,—not to *care* for their opinion.”

Here the lawyer pleaded a pressing engagement; and left us, without shaking of hands, or expressing a desire of seeing me again.

“You have made an enemy of that man,” observed my cicerone, “who will make you a hundred more enemies if you should ever think of settling in this city.”

“He did not seem to be offended,” replied I; “or I should have checked my tongue before he left us.”

“You can never tell when these people are offended,” he rejoined; “but you may rely upon one thing,—they will never forgive you. They lock their wrath up, until a favourable opportunity presents itself for taking summary vengeance. If I were in your place, *I would make myself scarce.*”

“What do you mean by that?”

“I mean, I would not show myself too much in public, or in society; or perhaps engage my passage to New York.”

“And you call this a free country!” exclaimed I, “and the manners of your people those of high-minded gentlemen! Good manners in other countries consist in putting every one at ease,

which may be done without being in the least degree familiar ; but here the higher classes seem to be determined upon making every one that is poorer than themselves feel his inferiority, in order to make him as uncomfortable as possible. And all this is done with an affectation of republican simplicity, which makes every species of arrogance only the more offensive as coming from an equal. The Southern people, whom you pronounce much more aristocratic, and who perhaps are so in the English sense of the word, are infinitely more amiable in their manners, merely because *their* exclusiveness relates to family and education, and because they are not continually in contact with the labouring classes.

“ In order to make any kind of aristocracy tolerable, it is necessary that it should, in some shape or other, either protect the lower classes, or never come in contact with them. The aristocracy of the Atlantic cities is unfortunately neither a protector of the lower orders, with whom it is continually wrestling for power ; nor is it, from its political position and mode of life, capable of avoiding incessant contact with them. Hence arises a continual jarring : the rich claiming a rank which the poor are unwilling to grant ; and the poor provoked by the *unprofitable* arrogance

of the rich, opposing to them a species of insolence which a labouring man in Europe would hardly dare to offer his equals.

“ I recollect some time ago having travelled on board of a canal-boat from Harrisburg to Pittsburg. The accommodations on board of these boats, the most bigoted American — and I know I address myself to none such — could not but call miserable ; and yet, the majority being satisfied, none dared to murmur. Our meals were shocking ; cooked in the worst manner, and served as no man in England would place a piece of bread before a day labourer. During the night we were put on shelves, of which three were placed one above the other at a distance of not more than from sixteen to twenty inches, and so close together that the feet of one person touched the head of his neighbour, and *vice versa*. To complete our misery, the cabin was not ventilated, the door being kept closed in order to prevent those who lay next to it from taking cold ; and we slept without sheets, the same unwashed and uncleaned blankets having perhaps served in turn to a hundred different pedlars and emigrants. But the *ne plus ultra* was one of the captains,* a New-Englander by birth ; a

* These change at the different stopping-places of the boat.

puny, pale, consumptive fellow with sharp grey eyes, thin pointed nose, long deeply-indented chin, and a dash across his face marking the opening of the mouth in the absence of lips. His voice, something between a growl and a grunt, seemed to proceed from a subterraneous cavern; while his hands, carefully concealed in his pockets, indicated, by their position, the usual current of his thoughts.

“ This fellow, whom no man of correct judgment would have made keeper of a pack of hounds, used to look upon the whole company with an air of conscious superiority; strutting the deck as if he were commander of a frigate, and scarcely deigning to address a word to any of the passengers. You will excuse me for this digression, which you will readily forgive when you reflect that I but agree with you in the opinion that, much as the New-Englanders are to be esteemed at home, — and there is none more ready to pay homage to their public and private virtue than myself, — they are nevertheless among the dullest, driest, and most disagreeable adventurers one meets abroad. This man had the impudence to serve the same meat three times to his passengers: first, with tea and coffee in the morning; then, with pure water at noon; and lastly, though there

was scarcely enough left to feed a dog, the remainder of the dinner was once more brought upon the table in the shape of a supper. Previous to that, we had been *kept*, as they call it, by a fat round-faced German, who gave us at least *plenty* to eat, and a friendly face in the bargain; but our Yankee captain seemed to be determined to make the most of our cash, without contracting the irregular polygon of his face into anything approaching a smile.

“ Under these circumstances, a German gentleman, who, to judge from his merry voice, and two large bumps of alimentiveness gracing his circular forehead, was fond of humour and good cheer, was amusing the company in tolerable good English with a few unequivocal innuendoes in reference to their *English comforts*; which were no sooner uttered than the captain, probably thinking that the *foreigner* was an *aristocrat* not admiring the institutions of the country, told him that his conversation was ‘most perfectly disgusting,’ and that, if he did not ‘hold his tongue,’ he should be obliged to put him ashore. These, as far as I can recollect, were the very words of the ill-humoured blackguard; and such an effect did they produce on the company that none dared to

remonstrate against his insulting conduct, though they *whispered* to one another that it was not altogether *gentlemanly* or *just*.

“ Now, this man would not have been half so insolent if the gentleman whom he reprobated had not been decently dressed, so as to lead him to suppose that he wanted to play the aristocrat. It was a species of revenge against what he imagined to be the taunts and sneers of ‘a vulgar upstart,’ who, in spite of his money, resorted to this mode of travelling for the sake of saving expenses.

“ If the higher classes claim superior respect, it is but just they should pay for it, as the higher classes do in Europe, where a man is charged according to his rank ; but how few of your fashionable people are willing to lay out an additional groat for the distinction they so ardently covet. They want to be esteemed merely because they are rich, though their wealth does not benefit any of their fellow-citizens.”

“ I remember a young Bostonian,” observed my cicerone, “ who employed a second-rate barber to cut his hair. The task not being performed to his satisfaction, he indignantly rose from the chair, placed a piece of twelve and a half cents (the usual price being twenty-five) on the table,

and, opening the door with great fury, told the affrighted little Frenchman that he should never *patronise* him again.

“Such instances of the liberality of our first people,” he continued, “occur every day; as you may yourself witness by frequenting our market. Every one of our gentlemen purchases his own provisions, so as to render the collusion of the servants with the tradespeople, which you know exists to a lamentable extent in England, wholly impossible. Our aristocracy, I can assure you, are a shrewd people; but unfortunately for the comforts of domestic life, their servants are equally shrewd, and stay with their calculating masters no longer than they can *help* it.

“This state of things,” added he, after a pause, “does not exist at the South. There the veriest fault of the people is generosity. The slaves, who enable them to be aristocratic without being mean, stand to them in the relation of vassals to their lords; and the planters, not fearing the power and political influence of their slaves, but, on the contrary, having an interest in their physical well-being, treat them generally with humanity and kindness. There never was a great moral evil, without producing also some good; and thus it is that the very relation between mas-

ter and slave engenders ties and affections which no one can understand without having witnessed their effect. I have seen the wives of planters watch at the sick-bed of their slaves, and perform acts of charity which the misconstrued self-esteem of our Northern people would have deemed menial, merely because the feelings of *kindness* and *gratitude*, which are strongest in the Southern States, are, with us, construed into *obligation* and *payment*; two things which effectually destroy all poetry of life, even in the relation of parents to their children. I am not here disposed to under-rate the miseries of slavery, as they will always appear to the mind of an European; but I cannot entirely overlook some of the advantages which result from it to the moral and social relations of the country."

And I could not but agree with my cicerone. If the tendency of wealth in the Northern States is towards an aristocracy of money, the aristocracy of the Southern States, founded on birth and education, is a sort of offset to it,—a means of preventing the degeneration of the high-minded democracy which once swayed the country, into a vulgar oligarchy of calculating machines without poetry, without arts, and without generosity.

"After all, the greatest benefactors of the Ame-

rican people were Southerners, from the great father of the country, down to its last chivalrous defender. Southern orators are yet the most eloquent; Southern statesmen the most disinterested in their views of national politics. Genius requires a heart as well as a head, or the seed lacks the warmth necessary for its germination. Give me the man whose blood flows quickly through his veins, with his ready perception and his high sense of honour! If aristocracy, the original sin of society, must be entailed upon man in every climate, then let me at once have that of the South. Give me an aristocracy above the cares and toils of ordinary life, which has the means and the leisure to devote itself to higher pursuits than mere pecuniary gain and profit,—an aristocracy to whom national honour and glory are not words without meaning, and whose estimation of a people's happiness is not deduced merely from its statistics of commerce and manufactures!

“I have always hoped, and still hope, that the democratic principle will, in America, prevail over all the others: but if this hope should prove delusive; if, in the phraseology of one of the ablest senators in the United States, ‘the multiplied wants of the country’ should beget an

universal worship of Mammon as the means of satisfying them ; then I would rather live surrounded by negroes, and, in the society of their aristocratic but high-minded and generous masters, seek some feeble consolation in the reflection that Rome and Greece were likewise cursed with slavery. I would prefer the aristocracy of the Southern States to that of the North, for precisely the same reason that I prefer, generally, a nobleman to a *roturier*."

" You are not very singular in your notions," observed my cicerone. " I do not remember a single European that came here but what expressed the same opinion ; but this singular coincidence has not in the least changed the opinion of our people, who are perfectly satisfied that their city stands unrivalled in the world for virtue, wisdom, and patriotism.

CHAPTER II.

Cross-examination of Foreigners in the United States.—Definition of Common Sense—Its high value in America.—Aversion to Genius.—Sensible reply of a Boston Aristocrat with regard to a Parvenu from the country.—Ladies buying themselves a Professor.—Boys at school learning for Money.—A Boston fashionable Concert—Description of the Musicians and the Audience.—High value of Morality in a Cantatrice.—Dangers of differing in matters of taste from the leading Coteries.—Secret Police in Boston.—Reflections.

worst

“ Unhappy he, who from the ~~first~~ of joys—
 Society—cut off, is left alone
 Amid this world of death. Day after day
 Sad on the jetting eminence he sits,
 And views the main that ever toils below.”

THOMSON'S *Seasons*.

THE day after my arrival in Boston I delivered my letters of introduction. Some I merely sent with my card ; others I carried in person, according to the custom of the country. My reception could not, of course, be equal to that of a well-recommended Englishman ; the word “ de ” having, by my request, been suppressed in all my

letters, and it not being known at that time that I was about to commit my impressions to paper. Yet was I received with politeness; subject, however, to a sort of cross-examination, of which, for the benefit of travellers, I will here furnish a short extract.

Question.—"How do you like this country?"

Answer (of course).—"Extremely well." (It will do no harm to show a little enthusiasm; the Bostonians, having little of that article themselves, like to see it in others.)

Question.—"How does this country appear to you compared with England?"

(This is a question never asked by the labouring class, who seem to care little or nothing about it; and proves at once your being in good society. You must answer it with great circumspection; as, if you give America the preference, they either think you a hypocrite, or a person not used to society and the world; and, if you show yourself too great a partisan for England, their vanity will never forgive you.)

Question.—"Do you intend to settle here?"

(This question is best answered in the negative.)

Question.—"Are you married or single?"

(If the stranger be a man of moderate fortune,

it will be best for him to call himself a married man ; the fashionable society of Boston having a great dread of poor bachelors.)

Question.—“ Do you not think we *enjoy* a very bad climate?”

(This they really believe ; but it is prudent in Europeans stoutly to deny it. The fact is, it is really not half so bad as generally represented ; there being more sunny days in America than, perhaps with the exception of Italy or Spain, in any part of Europe.

Question.—“ Don't you think the transition from heat to cold very sudden ?”

(Deny it by all means, even if there should have been a change of twenty degrees that very day.)

Then comes the praise of the American “ falls,” in which any one may join conscientiously ; an American landscape in the month of October being, on account of the infinite variety in the colour of the woods, and the extreme serenity of the sky, the most beautiful thing in the world.

National vanity—a feeling which is totally distinct from patriotism—exists in no part of the United States to such an extent as in New England, and especially in Boston, whose inhabitants think themselves not only vastly superior to any

people in Europe, but also infinitely more enlightened, especially as regards politics, than the rest of their countrymen. Thus the question has been seriously proposed to me, whether I had not been struck with the superior intelligence of the Bostonians, compared with the inhabitants of other cities in the United States and in Europe? and whether, on the whole, I had found any people in the world superior to those of New England?

These faults apart, I found the Bostonians quite an *entertaining*, I could not conscientiously say an *hospitable* people, because one does not feel at home amongst them, even after a residence of many years. The fact is, that though they boast of an unusual degree of "common sense" in their common transactions of life, very little of it is seen in their society. Society is the only sea with the navigation of which the New-Englanders are as yet unacquainted, in spite of the English, French, and Italian charts they study for that purpose. The moment their ladies and gentlemen sit in state, they are affected and awkward; *et quand le bon ton parait, le bon sens se retire*.

What the wealthy Bostonians generally understand by common sense, and the influence which the latter exercises on society, I soon had an op-

portunity of learning, at the house of a fashionable gentleman, a president of a bank, with whom I had the pleasure of dining a few days after my arrival in the city.

The individual in question was between forty-five and fifty years of age; apparently of a high bilious temper, with a livid complexion, grey piercing eyes, straight hair, compressed lips, thin nose and chin,—in short, a figure which in any part of the world I should have at once recognised as belonging to a matter-of-fact man from New England. There were but two more gentlemen to dine with us, and no ladies besides the wife and daughters of our entertainer; so that conversation soon began to flag, until, the dessert being put on the table, the restraint was taken off from the gentlemen by the good-natured retiring of the ladies.

Mine host was the first person who broke in upon the monotony of the entertainment, by introducing a topic which at once commanded the attention of his friends.

“Common sense,” he said, after having drunk the first glass of madeira and passed the bottle, “is the *genius*, or, as I do not like that word, the *essence* of society and good government; and I think,” added he with a self-complacent smile,

“no people in the world have inherited a larger share of this most invaluable commodity than our *cool, calm, calculating, money-making* Yankees. Did you ” (addressing himself to me) “ever see a more intelligent people than our Bostonians? Did you ever see a city more quiet, more prosperous, more orderly than Boston?”

“The appearance of Boston,” responded I, “certainly warrants all you say of it.”

“Yes, sir,” he rejoined; “and I can point out to you at least one hundred persons in that city worth upwards of a hundred thousand dollars.”

“That certainly argues in favour of the industry and perseverance of its inhabitants.”

“Say rather it argues in favour of their *common* sense,” said he, “in which industry and perseverance are necessarily included. We are a common sense, matter-of-fact people,” added he exultingly; “we leave genius and enthusiasm to Europeans.”

“Thank Heaven!” exclaimed his neighbour on the left, “I have no genius in *my* family; my children are all brought up to be industrious.”

“You may thank the Lord for that,” replied our entertainer; “I never saw a genius yet who

was either himself happy or capable of making others so. I have brought up my sons to become merchants and manufacturers; only Sam, the poor boy who is a little hard of hearing, and rather slow of comprehension, shall go to college. Our merchants, sir, are the most respectable part of the community."

"What college do you mean to send him to?" demanded I, in order to ascertain whether he had been serious.

"I shall send him to Harvard University," he replied; "the oldest literary institution in the country. Have you not yet been to see it?"

I told him that I had been but a few days in Boston, but that I should certainly take an early opportunity of visiting the institution.

"Do so," he said; "you will find it well worth your while; it will convince you that, while we have been making money, we have not altogether neglected arts and sciences."

"Which are your cleverest men in the various departments of science?" demanded I.

"Why, they are none of them very clever in *our* sense of the word. We consider professors as secondary men. Our practice is to give the different professorships away to young men, in order to induce them to devote themselves to the branch

they are to teach. Our country is as yet too young for old professors; and, besides, they are too poorly paid to induce first-rate men to devote themselves to the business of lecturing."

"In this manner," rejoined I, "you will never have eminent men in the higher departments of philosophy."

"We have as yet no time to devote to abstract learning," he observed; "we are too young for that. Our principal acquirement consists in common sense; all the rest we consider as moonshine. You must know," he said, with a countenance in which superiority of knowledge was mingled with condescension of manners, "that a young man learns as much in six months in a counting-room as in four years at college. My friends do not entirely agree with me; but I often told them that our colleges only made poor gentlemen, and spoiled clever tradesmen."

He then counted over the names of most of the rich men in Boston, who, he said, were all self-taught country boys, possessed of no other learning than the art of making dollars in a neat, handsome, clean manner. "This," he added, "has given them a higher standing in society than they could have acquired by all the philosophy in the world, and enabled them to marry

into the oldest and most aristocratic families of the place.

“Take, for instance, the case of our friend * * *. What does he know except making money? What has he ever learned except negotiating, or rather *shaving* notes? What college did he ever go to, except that of our brokers in State-street? And has he not married the daughter of one of our richest men? Has he not got one of the largest fortunes with her? And is he not now connected with some of our first people — with the real back-bone of our Boston aristocracy? And do you know the answer his father-in-law gave to one of his old friends, who remonstrated with him for giving his daughter away to a *parvenu* from the country? ‘I give my daughter to any man,’ said he, ‘who will come to Boston and have wit enough to make a hundred thousand dollars in six years.’ There’s common sense for you, I trust: that’s what we call practical philosophy.”

“It is certainly a melancholy fact,” sighed the gentleman next to me, who now for the first time opened his lips, “that a great number of our young men, who have gone to college, have afterwards been unsuccessful in business. I

think our education is not sufficiently practical ; —we are still attached to the European system.”

“ Not only that,” replied our entertainer, “ but most of our students contract habits of idleness, which will never answer in this country. They want to imitate your English gentleman, when their patrimony — I mean their *share* in their father’s fortune — is scarcely sufficient to keep them alive. Do you remember Mr. * * *’s reply to a young gentleman who had asked him his advice as to what he ought to do in order to succeed in business ? ‘ Take off your kid gloves,’ said he, ‘ and go to work.’ There’s philosophy for you, equal to your Kants and Leibnitz ! Mr. * * *, you know, is a plain-spoken man, who came to Boston without a cent in his pocket, and is now one of our most respectable citizens.”

“ But if this be the prevailing taste of your townsmen,” said I, “ why do you call Boston the Athens of the United States ? ”

“ That appellation,” replied he, “ refers to our women, not to our gentlemen. Our ladies read a great deal. And why should they not ? What else have they to do ? And we have, besides, a lot of literary twaddles, manufactured by the wholesale at Cambridge, who attempt to turn

the heads of our young girls with the nonsense they call 'poetry,' which fills nearly all our papers, instead of clever editorials. If we have one poet among us, we have at least fifty, the joint earnings of whom would not be sufficient to keep a dog. But then poets don't turn *our* heads, you see; we are too much occupied with business."

"But how do your literary men manage to get on?" demanded I: "I know several of them quite in easy circumstances."

"They marry rich women, who can afford paying for being entertained. They show their common sense in that. It's quite the fashion for our rich girls to *buy themselves a professor*, previous to taking a trip to Europe."

"And then," added my neighbour on the right, "literary reputations are in this city not acquired, as in other places, through the medium of public opinion; but by the aid of a small coterie, composed of a few 'leading citizens,' who have the power of setting a man up, or putting him down, just as they please;* the process being this. Mr. A. or Mr. B., wealthy gentlemen in Beacon-

* Public opinion sways the country in all respects except in matters of taste, which are entirely settled by the higher orders.

street, declare Mr. Smith a fine scholar; and immediately half a dozen of their clique will repeat the same assertion. The individual in question is thus made fashionable, so that any one speaking against him is considered unacquainted with the usages of society. Those, therefore, whose opinion—if they dare to have one—is different from Mr. A.'s and Mr. B.'s, are most likely to keep it to themselves; while every person aspiring to rank and fashion publicly swears to his scholarship: for our people, you must know, are accustomed to do everything from fear; nothing from love. If you want to succeed in anything,—if you want to carry any particular measure,—enlist half a dozen influential citizens in your behalf, and the rest will not dare *to back out*. That's the way things are done in this city.

“And the worst of it is,” he continued, “that our coteries are small, and, for the most part, led by one or two *prominent members of society*, who, on all similar occasions, act as dictators. Add to this, that our fashionable men have not the advantages of education and leisure enjoyed by the higher classes in Europe, and that their manners are generally stiff, uncouth, and overbearing; and you will easily understand why our society, so far from resembling that of Athens, must ne-

cessarily counteract the independent developement of mind and character.

“This habit of conforming to each other’s opinion, and the penalty set upon every transgression of that kind, are sufficient to prevent a man from wearing a coat cut in a different fashion, or a shirt-collar no longer *à la mode*, or, in fact, to do, say, or appear anything which could render him unpopular among a certain set. In no other place, I believe, is there such a stress laid upon ‘saving appearances.’ I once asked a relation of mine for what sum of money he might be prevailed upon to suffer his mustachoes to grow? He demanded twenty-four hours ‘to figure it out,’ and then told me the next day that he could not do it for one cent less than ten thousand dollars. He reasoned thus: ‘I am a man of moderate property, the interest of my patrimony being barely sufficient to pay for my board, I am therefore obliged to work, in part, for my living; but, my wants being few, an additional six hundred dollars would cover all my expenses. These I hope to earn by practising law, to which profession I was bred, and, for which I feel a natural predilection. Now, if I wear mustachoes, I must resign my practice as a lawyer; for with mustachoes I can neither go

to court, nor obtain a respectable chamber practice. Six hundred dollars are the interest, at six per cent. per annum, of ten thousand dollars, which, therefore, would be sufficient to make up for my loss ; for I can manage to live without society.’ ”

“ A few singularities of that sort may be charged to every people,” observed the gentleman of the house ; “ and, besides, I really do not see what business a young man has to wear mustachoes : I would certainly not employ him in a counting-room. We are a young people ; and, as such, must endeavour to get on by hard work, not by dandyism. Some of our instructors have the good sense to inculcate this doctrine even into our children ; and I do not see why grown persons should be permitted to set up a different rule for themselves.”

“ And pray, sir,” demanded I, “ in what manner do your instructors teach children the necessity of working ? ”

“ In the best manner,” replied he, “ common sense could dictate. *They make them study for money.* They distribute annually a certain sum,—say, from eighty to a hundred dollars,—in the shape of prize-money, among those who obtain the highest marks at the different recitations, for

which the pupils are numbered as high as *plus* seven, and as low as *minus* seven ; a certain number of positive marks entitling the child to one cent prize-money. At the end of the school-term accounts are made out, when each child receives a check on a bookseller or stationer for the amount due to him ; for which he may now select a book, a pen-knife, or some other trifling article, according to his own pleasure ; on which, moreover, the instructor himself enjoys a liberal discount."

"But does not this practice," I said, "introduce sordid habits at an age in which the mind is most susceptible of receiving impressions, and in which it is of the greatest importance to instil into children more elevated notions of honour and justice ?"

"You are entirely mistaken," replied he ; "and one can at once see from your remarks that you are a little dyed in the speculative philosophy of your country. No stimulus to learning can be half as great as when a boy can figure it out on his slate how many dollars and cents his geography, grammar, spelling, reading, and good conduct come to *per annum*."

This *common sense* of the Bostonians, thought I, as I was walking home, is, after all, very nar-

rowly circumscribed; referring in most cases merely to immediate wants, and the means of satisfying them. But it is in referring actions to ultimate principles that men rise above commonplace, in proportion, perhaps, as they render themselves liable to error. Common sense is a sort of instinct sufficient to guide men through the lower spheres of life; but of itself incapable of raising them to a high moral elevation. Common sense, in fact, is the genius of mediocrity. It does not expand or liberalize the mind, or communicate to it any great and generous impulse. It refers to a sort of *intérêt bien entendu*; and is, on that account, not in very high repute among a large portion of the Southern people. I remember what a Southern Jacksonian once told me with regard to the politics of Massachusetts. "We do not want that State," he said, "to come over to our side, because it would prejudice the rest of the Union. People would immediately ask what concession has Government made to the particular *interests* of that State?" This is the idea which the Americans themselves entertain of the common sense of the leading citizens of Boston.—*Point d'argent, point de Suisses!*

In the evening I saw again my cicerone, who proposed going to the concert, which he pro-

Very Good

mised me would be one of the most fashionable ones of the season. We accordingly shaped our course towards Masonic Hall,—a building in style slightly approaching the Gothic, but in size not much larger than an ordinary dwelling-house,—which, ever since freemasonry became unpopular in Boston, has been changed into a temple of the Muses.

On looking over the bill, I found that the performers had a peculiar way of recommending themselves to the notice of the higher classes of Americans. In the first place, all of them were professors, members of different philharmonic societies in Europe, whose favourite airs, duettos, concerts, &c. had met with universal applause in London, Paris, and St. Petersburg. Then they were all composers; the bill expressly announcing a favourite air from “*La Gazza Ladra*,” arranged by Professor * * *; duetto from “*Gli Italiani in Algieri*,” with variations by Mr. * * *, Professor of the Royal Conservatory of * * *; &c. A Spaniard even went so far as to give notice that a grand rondo, originally composed for the violin by Mayseder, would be performed with variations by Professor * * *, late first flute-player to his Majesty the ex-Emperor of Brazil.

I communicated to my friend my astonishment

at the fashionable people of America being so easily duped by high-sounding titles, which in Europe would at once stamp a man as a charlatan or a village performer ; but was assured that this was the regular way of proceeding in all the Atlantic cities, the judgment of the higher classes in matters of taste confirming, without a single exception, the verdict pronounced by the connoisseurs of Europe.

“ You will,” he said, “ to-night hear the voice of a woman who in England would at best be considered a tolerable good ballad-singer for a provincial theatre, but you will witness the storm of applause with which she will be received *here*. It is such a fine opportunity for all who have taste, to show their superiority over those who have not had an opportunity of improving themselves in Europe. This songstress, moreover, is introduced to some of our first people, who will collect here to-night, and by their significant nods and half-subdued ‘bravos’ induce the multitude to the clapping of hands. Our *leading citizens* think themselves bound by hospitality to applaud an English *cantatrice* : for which reason the second, third, and fourth rows of benches are occupied by *tout ce qu’il y a de mieux*,—that is, by *tout ce qui a de cent à cinq cents mille écus* ;

the first benches being declined by all, either from modesty, or from fear of making themselves too conspicuous before the public.

“An American aristocrat, you must know,” continued my cicerone, “is a gentleman of very nice feelings, who, while he is most anxious to avoid notoriety among *the people*, in order to avoid public censure, is at the same time particularly solicitous to push himself forward in his coterie, in order by his social standing to make up for the injustice of politics.”

“I presume,” said I, “most of the gentlemen on the forward benches are merchants?”

“Let me see,” he said, standing on tiptoe. “They are mostly merchants; but I also discover two lawyers, and a fashionable clergyman. There is, however, not a man amongst them worth less than one hundred thousand dollars.”

“Pray, is a rich man here supposed to understand something about music?” demanded I.

“Most assuredly he is,” replied he. “You will always find the richest men give the first sign of approbation, after which the minor fortunes venture to signalize theirs. Our society is so small that every man in it is known; so that no individual can be guilty of a breach of etiquette without having at once the whole clique

against him. There is more social tyranny in this place than you could find anywhere in Europe. Every principle of morals, politics, or religion is set up as an article of faith; our infallible moneyed men proclaiming in their counting-rooms, and on 'change, the Popish doctrine *Nulla salus extra ecclesiam Catholicam*."

While we were thus discussing *la haute société* of Boston, Mrs. * * *, from London, made her appearance, and—her morality being endorsed by three responsible merchants—was received with thundering applause; the *Honourable* Mr. * * * giving, as drum-major, the signal with a beautiful cane, which was immediately answered by "*the middling interests*" in the centre, and at last echoed by the mechanics, perched up in the rear. Mrs. * * * courtesied. Renewed applause; during which she, at last, opened her cherub lips, and, with a great deal of common sense,—that is, without any of the coquetry of a French actress, or the *agaceries* of an Italian *prima donna*,—sang off two or three verses of one of those English ballads which sound so prettily in a private parlour, and so badly in a large concert-room. The worst of it was, that instead of the simple melody, which in most English or German compositions is exceedingly touching, she endeavoured to show

her school, and the scope of her voice, by introducing variations, which were duly acknowledged by the people to whom she had been recommended. The *ladies*, especially, seemed not so much to admire her voice, as her modesty in not looking once from the music on the fashionable young men whose eyes were fastened upon her.

English women, being fine and tall, charm sufficiently by their placid beauty, and a certain *laissez aller* which they carry off admirably. French and Italian women, on the contrary, are, as a race, far less handsome, but considerably more *piquantes*. *Ces sont des femmes caressantes*. An English woman is made to be wooed; a French one entices *you* by a thousand little trifles, which it is the study of her life to practise with success. One is, perhaps, truly amiable; the other *interests* you by her very peevishness. The fair songstress seemed to be amiable in the English fashion, for she was all good nature—the usual concomitant of a certain *embonpoint*, and smiled continually—on her music-book.

“But how is it possible,” said I to my cicerone, “to applaud such singing as this? There is neither simplicity nor taste, neither feeling nor execution in her performance, and yet the storm of applause is not abating.”

“ For the Lord’s sake !” exclaimed he, “ do not say that loud enough for other people to hear you. It would deprive you of many an innocent pleasure you would perhaps otherwise enjoy during your stay in this city. Our *élite* never forgive such a difference of opinion to one of their own clique ; how much more, then, must a foreigner be on his guard ! And in this case, too, where Mr. and Mrs. * * * have taken the songstress under their protection ! It would be sufficient to exclude you at once from society. This is a *free* country, sir ! every man may do or think what he pleases, only he must not let other people know it. You might just as well attack one of our fashionable preachers as Mrs. * * *.”

“ If this is what you call freedom in Boston,” said I, “ I will not go to another concert, if Paganini himself were to perform here.”

“ And yet, if you heard an oratorio performed by our ‘ Handel and Haydn Society,’ you would, perhaps, change your opinion. That society is almost wholly composed of mechanics, who cultivate music from taste, and pay their German leader, a good scientific musician, a very handsome salary.”

“ Singular city this !” exclaimed I, “ in which the labouring classes cultivate music from taste,

and in which the rich people listen to it from obligation. I shall be obliged to leave the room. Will you not accompany me?"

"I should like to do so," whispered he; "but it would be observed. I am obliged to live with these people; and you know the proverb, 'Among Romans do as Romans do.' *A propos*; if any one should ask you about the concert, and especially about Mrs. * * *, say you were '*delighted*;' that's the word now. There is no use in making yourself enemies; *delighted*, sir! Don't forget your cue."

What an extraordinary phenomenon, thought I as I went home, this state of society must be to an European! And is it a wonder if, under such circumstances, the most paltry scribbler thinks himself justified in caricaturing it? Here is a free people voluntarily reducing itself to a state of the most odious social bondage, for no other object but to maintain an imaginary superiority over those classes in whom, according to the constitution of their country, all real power is vested; and here are the labouring classes, probably for the first time permitted to legislate for themselves, worshipping wealth in its most hideous colours! Here, then, is a society formed as nearly as possible on the abstract theory of equality; and this is

the state to which it has become reduced by the aspirings of a few wealthy families in less than a century ! If such is the tendency towards decay in all human institutions, how jealous ought the people to be of the most trifling privileges, arrogated exclusively by certain classes.

And what species of tyranny is worse than that which attempts to control a man's private actions, his worship, his domestic arrangements, and his pleasures ? What can be more absurd than for a certain class, for the most part not a whit better educated than the rest, to assume the dictatorship in all matters relating to politics, religion, or the arts ? And how can it be reconciled with the spirit of independence, manifested more or less by every American, to see so large a portion of their countrymen governed by the tinsel logic of such a coterie ? Nothing can excite the contempt of an educated European more than the continual fears and apprehensions in which even the "most enlightened citizens" of the United States seem to live with regard to their next neighbours, lest their actions, principles, opinions, and beliefs should be condemned by their fellow creatures !

I have heard it seriously asserted in America, that there are no better policemen than the ordinary run of Bostonians ; and that, as long as

their natural inquisitiveness remained, there was no need of a secret tribunal ; every citizen taking upon himself the several offices of spy, juryman, justice, and—*vide* Lynch law—executioner. This is by some called the wholesome restraint of public opinion : but, in order that public opinion may be just, it must not be biased by the particular faith of a coterie ; and there are transactions in private life of which the public ought never to be made the judge.

There is scarcely a degree of political freedom which can compensate a man for the loss of independence in his private transactions, and the want of a generous liberality in the community at large. There are individuals whose tastes and dispositions are not likely to involve them in any political or religious controversy, and who therefore can be comparatively free, even under a despotic government ; but, in a community like Boston, no abstract rule of conduct can be laid down, capable of protecting a man against censure and retaliation. This peculiarity in the composition of its society I do not, however, like so many others, ascribe to the political institutions of the country, which, on the contrary, are constantly counteracting its effects ; but to the aristocracy of money, unmitigated as it is by superior education, and unlimited

in its influence either by the existence of a real nobility or a powerful sovereign.

The *moveable, moneyed* aristocracy of our times I consider as the greatest enemy of mankind, in comparison to which all the terrors of the feudal system are as nothing. The nobility of the middle ages offered to the people protection for vassalage, and set them the example of chivalry and valour. A mere moneyed aristocracy, on the contrary, enslaves the people without giving them an equivalent, introducing everywhere the most sordid principles of selfishness, to the exclusion of every noble and disinterested sentiment. A mere moneyed preponderance of one class of citizens over the other, does not form an historical link between the present and the past; neither does it, like the masses, represent the interests of mankind in general. All its tendencies are downwards, reducing a people gradually to a degree of moral degradation, from which perhaps they might have been saved by the presence of a powerful nobility of family.

CHAPTER III.

Maternal Affections of American Ladies — their Cause. — Want of Romance in the Lives of American Gentlemen. — Moral and Religious Cant. — Daniel Webster's Principle of resisting arrogant Innovation. — Reflections on the Democratic, Aristocratic, and Monarchical Forms of Government. — The Bunker Hill Monument. — Want of Patriotism in the Higher Classes of Americans. — The English Feeling in Boston. — Americans passing for Englishmen in Europe. — Anecdotes. — The American Aristocracy take the House of Lords under their Protection. — Their Contempt for the Western Settlers. — The American Character not understood in Europe.

“ And as for Heaven ‘being love,’ why not say ‘honey
Is wax?’ Heaven is not love, ’tis matrimony.”

BYRON.

WHEN I again saw my cicerone, I communicated to him my surprise at seeing so few women frequenting theatres, concerts, and other places of amusement. To one lady seen at the theatre there are at least three or four gentlemen; whereas at church the relation is the reverse, proving the

ladies to be much more piously inclined than the men.

“ Our women,” he said, “ are too much confined at home, attending on their children ; and yet this, and going to church, constitute their only pleasures in this world. Ours is yet a country in which preachers are better paid than actors and musicians ; and a seat in a pew of one of our fashionable ‘ meeting-houses ’ is offered you with the same ceremonious politeness, as, in Italy, a box at the opera.”

“ I have always heard that American women made the best mothers,” said I.

“ As regards the maternal affections of our women,” replied he, “ I can easily conceive why they should be strong. It is nearly all the romance (!) they enjoy ; the duties they assume in marrying overbalancing infinitely the caresses and attentions bestowed upon them by their husbands. Our young men are an industrious, steady, persevering, but not an amiable race of beings. They have a high respect for ladies in general ; but they are not devoted to them beyond the forms and usages of society. Money-making is the principal pursuit to which they are devoted ; and which so completely absorbs their time, that, between business and politics, they

hardly find time for the cultivation of affections.

“ And our rich people,” he continued, “ are, in this respect, more to be pitied than the poor. The latter spend their few leisure hours, or rather *minutes*, at home, in the circle of their families ; while the former are compelled to waste them in society. And what society is that ? It does not consist of a few friends whom accident assembles round the fireside, to pass away an evening in agreeable chit-chat. Our fashionable people are not fond of this cheap, unostentatious sort of amusement ; and, besides, it does not suit the taste of our boys and girls, who are only satisfied with a dance. For this reason our parties are expensive, and afford little or no relaxation to men of sense. I once heard a diplomatist say, that a young man, in order to form his manners and judgment, ought to choose his female society from among ladies not under thirty, and his male companions from gentlemen not under forty years of age ; but certainly, if manners and judgment are to be acquired only on such terms, our state of society is such that our young men must for ever remain deficient in them.

“ If our married women were to be compensated for the loss they sustain in society by

increased attention from their husbands, they might perhaps profit by the exchange. But our business men have no time for cooing. Their first object is trade; everything else is subordinate. There is a great deal of domestic comfort in the United States, resulting from sound principles of morality and religion, especially on the part of the women; but I have hardly ever seen that tender affection—that union of souls, in which two persons require nothing but each other's consent for the completion of their happiness. That state, I am aware, requires either absolute poverty, or a degree of wealth and refinement which, from the vain attempt to satisfy the heart with the gratification of artificial wants, returns once more to the legitimate source of all human happiness. Both cases are as yet unknown in America; labour securing a competency to every industrious man, and the laws and institutions of the country preventing the accumulation of property.

“These circumstances make us a practical and active, but not an enthusiastic or imaginative people. We choose our fair companions according to the dictates of good sense, not after ‘some fanciful creation of the mind.’ Our country is not yet a land of *beaux idéals*.”

“On this account,” proceeded my travelled

cicerone, “ we are not subject to disappointment when the dreams of our youth are not realized ; and the organization of society prevents us even from perceiving our error. Suppose one of our young men to marry a woman whose tastes, disposition, and character are essentially different from his own ; it would not necessarily follow that the union must, on this account, prove an unhappy one. The points of contact are so few, the sphere of action of each party so well defined by custom and law, and the occupation of the man out of the house so constant, that he may become the father of a large family, and even die without finding out his mistake. This assertion seems to be absurd, and yet it is true to the very letter. And it is this sort of passiveness in all matters not relating to business or politics, which, though it may not constitute the most amiable or interesting feature of our character, is nevertheless the principal cause of the universal content which pervades our community.

“ A similar match in Europe would be the source of endless misery. The comparative leisure enjoyed even by the labouring classes would prove a source of pain to two minds not perfectly tuned in unison. Nothing creates so

many artificial wants, — nothing is, in itself, such exquisite luxury as leisure.* Our rich, industrious population may pity the poor *lazzarone*, who is badly fed, scarcely covered, and who has no other couch to lay his limbs upon but the marble steps of a palace or a church; and yet how many such vagabonds would be willing to exchange their position with that of our most opulent citizens? Such is the difference in men's ideas of happiness.

“An European computes his *time*, or rather his *leisure moments*, better than his money; in America the case is reversed. In Europe, wealth is comparatively within the reach of few; but every one has his little share of leisure, from the day-labourer who has his hour at noon and his vesper, to the *rentier* who lives in idleness. Under these circumstances, the choice of a companion determines a man's happiness for life. Great and many are the calls on each other's sympathy in pleasure and in affliction, and a single discord destroys the harmony for ever. A man may live with a woman of different tastes,—

* Those of my readers who are disposed to doubt the possibility of such sentiments proceeding from an American, must be informed that my cicerone, being the son of a government envoy of high rank, was born and educated in Europe.

he may eat and drink with her, — he may see her at specified hours of the day, — he may share his fortune or anything else with her without being unhappy; but who can describe the feelings of an enthusiast whose wife remains motionless at one of Shakspeare's plays?— at the sight of the ocean or the Alps?

“ These inequalities of taste and disposition become a true source of misery in proportion as we have leisure to give scope to our imagination. In active life, in the pursuits of agriculture, commerce, or manufactures, they are hardly noticed. What time, I would ask you, has one of our young men to be unhappy?—when in the morning he rises, to read the papers; then takes his breakfast, at which his fair partner presents him with her own white hands two cups of hyson or pekoe, with the trifling addition of a steak or a chop; then goes to his counting-room, where he remains until one; then passes the hour from one till two on 'change; then returns home to eat his beef and pudding, which he accomplishes in about ten minutes; then returns once more to his counting-room, where he remains till sunset; then comes home to swallow his two or three cups of tea; after which, if there be no political *caucas*, no evening lecture, or late arrival of the

mail, he is heartily glad to go to rest, in order to gather strength for the work of the next day? What can it matter to him whether his wife be sentimental? whether she have imagination or taste? whether she be an admirer of the drama?

“ ‘What’s Hecuba to him, or he to Hecuba?’ ”

“ Our *fashionable* men,” continued he, with a sarcastic contraction of his lips, which was his usual substitute for a smile, “ are less fortunate. They are not permitted to go to bed when they are tired. *Society* has claims upon them; they must contribute their share to the entertainment of the evening. Accordingly, they are obliged to wash and dress, put on kid gloves, and prepare, in every other respect, for the sacrifice, to which they are led by their wives like so many sheep to the slaughter-house. Being, as married people, excluded from dancing, and cards being abolished among us, they are obliged to amuse themselves with taking refreshments, which I believe they always do, until, towards ten, a regular supper rewards their patience; after which the majority of the company get into their hacks, swearing that it was a capital entertainment, at which there was plenty to eat, and a great profusion of choice and exquisite wines.

“As regards our women, they are, with the exception of the time consumed at meals, the whole day left to themselves; a circumstance which is not calculated to render their existence a happy one, unless they are blessed with children to break in upon its monotony, and afford fresh scope for their affections. Hence our women love their offspring passionately; while for their husbands they feel a sort of half-distant respect, wholly opposed to that tender familiarity without which it is impossible to penetrate into a woman's heart.

“In this manner our men are cheated—or rather cheat themselves—out of the poetical part of matrimony; but are also saved from a vast deal of mortification. At any rate, our hard-featured, industrious Yankees, who are accustomed to act from principle, not from impulse,—from conviction, not from inclination,—have shown themselves worthy of living under free institutions, which seem to compensate them for the absence of those pleasures which a higher degree of refinement and an abundance of leisure secure to the higher classes of Europe; and the remark of a celebrated European statesman was, perhaps, a wise one, when he said ‘that a people is fit for liberal institutions in exactly the same proportion

as its whole time is employed in satisfying its physical wants.’ ”

“ But how is it possible,” demanded I, “ that with all this political liberty, and the constant occupation of all classes of society, you should have become reduced to a degree of social bondage, of which no city in Europe, and scarcely one in Asia, furnishes an example? Remember, I have not yet forgotten the advice you gave me at the concert.”

“ All this,” replied he, “ is owing to the excessive prudence which pervades our higher society, and which, in reality, makes them believe that no European can fathom them. Our gentlemen are, indeed, not endowed with the faculty of second sight; but they have what they call ‘ second thoughts,’ a sort of *arrière pensée*, which it is not always easy to decipher, and is frequently the whole substitute for profundity or research. Thus they have always two motives for one and the same act,—a public and a *private* one; and, as many Europeans who come here to study our character are ingenuous enough to consider one motive quite sufficient for each act, it is an even chance they are mistaken, whether they have a view to our private or public motives. If you stay long enough among us, you will hear mora-

lity, politics, and even religion advocated from more than one *prudent* motive. High, exalted views, or enthusiasm for one or the other of these all-important subjects, you will, indeed, meet with occasionally; but, in general, we look upon all such sentiments as unhealthy, feverish, unbecoming a ‘calm,’ ‘sober,’ ‘calculating’ people. We delight in prose, though we frequently *talk* poetry. Poetry with us is a *public* consideration, for which reason its place is usually the newspapers. It is food for the multitude; our *private* motives seldom rise beyond a clear view of our own immediate interests. In the inimitable language of one of our most fashionable young ladies, we *admire* roast beef, and *dote* on oyster pies.

“This is in some degree the origin of our cant in morality and religion, which our politicians, when there is no other absorbing topic, such as manufactures, commerce, fisheries, &c. employ for the purpose of ‘making a hit.’ In the absence of enthusiasm, which would inspire them with natural eloquence, they seek to maintain themselves at a certain elevation by pressing hard on lofty topics; having no wings, they endeavour to support themselves in the air by a *parachute*. Thus the words ‘virtue,’ ‘patriotism,’ ‘morality,’ ‘religion,’ ‘piety,’ are in every one’s mouth. All

these terms had originally a distinct meaning attached to them, and to the mass of the people they are still full of import ; but, being thus used on the most trifling occasion, they must sooner or later become degraded to mere figures of speech.

“ The same holds of our republican manners. You will see many of our public characters wear the garb of humility in the presence of their meanest fellow-citizens ; they carry their own *portemanteaux* when landing from a steam-boat, shake hands with everybody on election day, and, like *Hildebrand*, assume, when walking or standing, an inclined posture ; but let them once be elected, and you will see them draw themselves up to their full height, exclaiming ‘ *Ego sum papa !*’ With all our democratic machinery, our Atlantic cities contain more lingering, pining, ‘ aspirants to honourable distinction,’ than perhaps could be found in any equal number of men in Europe.

“ Besides,” continued he, “ our rich people, who, in the absence of a law of primogeniture, preserve their wealth by marrying cousins,* and our young merchants, who become rich by successful speculations, are somewhat tired of their

* Against this practice, Dr. Spurzheim, the lecturer on phrenology, strongly remonstrated while in Boston, pointing to the pernicious consequences on the health and vigour of the rising generation.

monotonous state of existence. Many of them have been in Europe, where their property has enabled them, occasionally, to associate with the higher orders. They have witnessed the importance attached in *civilized* countries to rank and fortune, and are therefore, out of pure philanthropy, anxious to introduce the same high degree of civilization in America. ‘*Do we not see the world prosper around us?*’ asks Mr. Daniel Webster, the great Massachusetts statesman and orator ;* ‘do we not see OTHER GOVERNMENTS, and OTHER NATIONS, enlightened by experience, and rejecting ARROGANT INNOVATIONS and THEORETIC DREAMS, accomplishing the great ends of society?’

“Now is not this Conservatism with a vengeance! Would an English Tory have dared to make such an avowal before a British parliament? Where would England be, if her born or chosen legislators had looked round for precedents among other nations? What would have become of the United States, if the representatives of the people, in 1776, had held the same language? What better argument can be made in favour of absolute despotism in any country, than that ‘other na-

* Daniel Webster's second speech on the Sub-treasury System proposed by the present administration.

tions, and other governments, reject *arrogant innovations* and *theoretic dreams*? The decree of the Emperor of China against the introduction of Christianity is not more profound in its argument; and yet Mr. Webster is, in this respect, nothing but a plagiary! Arrogant innovations were resisted in China long before the birth of the honourable senator for Massachusetts.

“ Such doctrines as these will explain to you, at the same time, the views of our Whigs. Compare them to the principles of Toryism in England, and the conviction will irresistibly be forced upon you that the latter are a thousand times more liberal, and compatible with the freedom of the people. How many measures for the welfare of the English people have emanated from the nobility! But these *Whigs*, who are just one or two steps removed from the masses, think themselves beset by dogs, and are continually kicking for fear of being bitten.

“ These sentiments will not surprise any one who has heard ‘ the most influential citizens ’ assert that the republic has secured no great and signal benefit to the United States; that they were just as free, and certain classes even freer, under the British Government; that there can be nothing worse than the present mob-government,

&c. These sentiments, I say, had ceased to astonish me; they only served to convince me of the necessity of trusting to institutions, not to men, the welfare of the state."

In the present struggle for power, ambitious men may yet hope to arrive at honourable distinction through legitimate means—through the suffrages of the people; and hence the decision of every great question is still referred to the latter, although in a manner so distorted by cunning and sophistry that the people can scarcely see the true point at issue. For this reason the United States are, as yet, free from secret societies, private meetings and assemblies for political purposes, and leagues of powerful families for the furtherance of treasonable objects. Neither of the two parties, the would-be-aristocratic or the democratic, is as yet firmly established in power, or can hope to acquire and retain it for any length of time; but it is even this unsettled state which, by some, is taken for a surety of the continuance of the republican government.

Every institution, democratic, aristocratic, or monarchical, was originally good, and remained so as long as it answered the purpose for which it was first established. For this reason it is absurd to praise or censure, in the abstract, either of these

forms of society. The elements of each of them probably co-existed at all times, even under governments the most republican or despotic: all calamities which ever befel mankind arose from their misapplication, or from the disproportion between the progress of society (no matter in what direction) and the relative preponderance of one or the other of these three principles.

If any of the two great parties which divide the United States, as they do the rest of the world, should ever succeed in breaking up and destroying the other; if any one of them were to establish itself so firmly in power, as to make its political antagonists wholly despair of overthrowing it by constitutional means; then one of two great evils would necessarily ensue,—political indifference on the part of a great number of industrious and wealthy citizens; or a lawless opposition, not to the party in power, but to the *institutions* under which they hold it. Something of the kind—at least the former of the two cases—actually occurred during the latter part of the administration of General Jackson; at which time a large portion of wealthy, and formerly influential citizens, believing it in vain to make any farther resistance to the sway of democracy, entirely withdrew from politics, and frankly expressed, at home and abroad, in

conversation and in public prints, their contempt for the government and institutions of America. Now that, by a series of changes which it is not here the place to explain, political influence and power seem to be once more within their reach, they begin again to take an active part in public affairs, recommencing their opposition to democracy with renewed vigour.

The government of the United States requires, more than any other, a strong opposition, in order to prevent a powerful faction from assuming a monarchical sway through one or more of its leaders. Democracies and aristocracies may eventually terminate in monarchies; their most critical moment being always that in which one of two great parties has gained some signal victory over the other. The power obtained by the conquerors is necessarily concentrated in the hands of a few political champions; who, being on such occasions, for a time at least, independent of public opinion, or having that opinion in their favour, may dictate law. Such a moment is fraught with dangers, even if the democratic party be the conqueror; the transition from democracy to monarchy being far more easy than that from aristocracy to the government of a single individual. The latter is, indeed, impos-

sible until the aristocracy is completely absorbed by the democratic element, and by degrees spoliated of its prerogatives.

For this reason a powerful aristocracy of family has always been the strongest bulwark against arbitrary power, and the preserver of liberty in the middle ages. But, in order that the aristocratic element shall fulfil its high destination, it must have an *historical* basis ;—it must date from the origin of the country, and, like the aristocracy of England, have contributed to the foundation of the state. A mere mushroom aristocracy of money, taken yesterday from behind the counter, possesses none of these essential qualities ; and is on that account neither capable of protecting the lower classes, nor of forming by itself a powerful political party. What a commercial aristocracy may do for the happiness of a people, even when reflecting on its historical grandeur, we have seen in the example of Venice, from the time the signory elected the chief magistrate, in 1173, to that in which she stooped

“ ————— to be

A province for an empire, petty town
In lieu of capital, with slaves for senates,
Beggars for nobles, panders for a people.”

The establishment of a purely democratic go-

vernment—that is, of one in which the democratic prevails over the aristocratic and monarchical principles,—is an historical problem which, under the most favourable circumstances ever combined, was intrusted to the American people. These circumstances will continue to act for centuries in their favour; and suppose the government finally to become modified, could such an event disprove the fact that, as long as the republic *did* last, the people were prosperous and happy, the nation respected abroad, and its domestic affairs managed with skill and integrity? Is it an argument against democratic institutions that they cannot last for ever? Might you not just as well despise youth and vigour, because they are doomed to old age and decrepitude? If it be true that all republics finally changed into aristocracies or monarchies, it ought to make the Americans only the more jealous of preserving the purity of their institutions, in order that, if an aristocracy *must* come, it may not be one of mere wealthy stock-jobbers.

“Come,” said my cicerone, “let us take a walk over to Charlestown, ‘the mob quarter,’ as our enlightened citizens call that independent suburb of Boston. We shall have a fine view of

the city and the harbour from Bunker's Hill monument, the most classical object in this neighbourhood."

"How far is it now completed?" demanded I. "I was told they did not go on with it from want of funds."

"That monument," replied he, "of which no one can tell when it will be finished, is a sad proof of the preference given by the Bostonians to *realities*, rather than to fictions of honour and glory. Our people are not fond of the poetry of history. They seem to have fought for liberty because it was a thing worth fighting for, without being fired with that enthusiasm for a great and noble cause with which we have seen millions of Europeans rush into battle as into a banquet-room.

"We Yankees are not like the heroes of antiquity; we are not ambitious, and do not even think it worth our while to leave traces of our virtues and achievements to posterity. We are not easily moved by historical recollections, and therefore think it a useless vanity to erect monuments for our children, in order to stimulate them to great and generous actions. This is a new illustration of our common sense. Being less exposed to invasions from a foreign enemy,

and less dreading the aspirations of a powerful faction within, we do not see our institutions surrounded by those dangers, in the struggle against which love of liberty and of country become the absorbing passions of a people. Liberty, with us, constitutes a quiet possession, which we hope to retain rather by prudence and economy than by enthusiasm and courage."

"I have heard a number of Bostonians," observed I, "animadvert seriously against the celebration of the 4th of July, the anniversary of the declaration of independence; and especially against the reading of that instrument from the pulpit, because it contains expressions offensive to a power with which the Americans are now living in peace and amity."

"We do not wish our children to imbibe that tender affection for liberty," replied he, "which a lover cherishes for his mistress; we want them to be wedded to it in the good old Puritan fashion, without going through the tedium of a sentimental courtship. Our liberal institutions are, with us, a sort of household furniture intended for common use, well kept and guarded from injury, but no object of ardent attachment or devotion."

The total absence of enthusiasm among the

higher classes of Americans, I found, indeed, one of the most remarkable features of their character. They consider the democratic institutions of their country *opposed* to national grandeur; and feel, therefore, little inclined to commemorate events which could either flatter the vanity, or excite the emulation, of the lower classes. They seem to be of opinion that the people of the United States have full as much liberty as they can bear, and that a little more would unavoidably upset the whole. This will be considered as a gross slander on the patriotism of the aristocracy; but it is nevertheless a conclusion I have deliberately come to, after a long series of observation. Love of liberty and of country I found infinitely stronger among the labouring classes, who do not enjoy the advantage of finishing their education in Europe; absolute contempt, and sometimes hatred of the institutions of their country, among those who have had the means of spending several years abroad. What is the world to argue from it?

The monument at Bunker's, or rather Breed's Hill,—for the Americans mistook their position in the night, and fortified Breed's Hill instead of Bunker's Hill,—was intended, I believe, for a plain obelisk, which, if it were completed, would

command a most superb view of the city and the harbour: as it now stands, it is nothing but a modern ruin, — a lasting reproach to the want of *nationality* of the Bostonians. Want of *public spirit* it cannot be; because the Bostonians have given a thousand proofs of their readiness to make large pecuniary sacrifices in order to further the establishment of institutions calculated to benefit the community. The establishment of the Athenæum, principally through the munificence of a merchant; the Asylum for the Blind, towards which Mr. Perkins contributed alone ten thousand pounds sterling; the great liberality of all classes whenever an appeal is made to their charity; and lastly, the large sums paid annually for the support of common schools and public lectures, do not allow me to entertain the least doubt on the subject.

But, in the case of the monument at Bunker's Hill, "the English feeling," for which the higher classes of Boston were always distinguished, seems to have acted as a counterpoise; and to have, if not absolutely prevented its completion, at least withheld those sums which would have been readily contributed for another object. The *Boston ladies*, who, it is said, have a good deal of public spirit, made an attempt to revive the

national pride of the gentlemen, but without effect; the outward respect paid by the Americans "to the sex" being essentially different from that species of gallantry which makes men delight in anticipating the wishes of women without being regularly pressed into the service. The "appeal of the ladies," therefore, remained without effect, and a few of the forward ones barely escaped being ridiculed in the public prints. "This is a sad state of society," say the disciples of Miss Martineau; "but all this will be changed when the ladies will vote, and hold public meetings for the propagation of patriotism."

"If the *English feeling* of our aristocracy," observed my cicerone, "were to manifest itself only by the omission of expensive monuments, it would, perhaps, less expose us to the censure of our patriots, or the just ridicule of Europeans. But I have known gentlemen whose highest glory consisted in not being recognised as Americans while in England, and whose delight it was to pass on the Continent *pour des Mylords Anglais*. One of them, a youngster of not more than twenty-one years of age, was, on his stay in Paris, particularly afraid of being taken for an American savage. He spoke on all occasions of

England as his native country — (our fashionable young men, you know, talk of going *home* to England,) — and commenced and finished his sentences with ‘*Nous autres en Angleterre,*’ ‘*nous autres à Londres,*’ &c. In the travellers’ books he signed himself Mr. * * *, ‘*Rentier de Londres ;*’ his clothes were made by a London tailor, his hat was English ; and he even imitated the bad English accent when speaking French, though he could speak the language tolerably well when he wanted to shine before Americans.

“ A year or two ago,” he continued, “ I met, on the Rhine, with a still more extraordinary phenomenon. It was nearly in the middle of the month of August, when I went in a steamer from Mayence to Coblenz. There were a number of Englishmen on board, who, according to their custom, avoided as much as possible every kind of contact with the rest of the company. They were seated on one side of the boat, gazing on the moving panorama of the river ; occasionally ejaculating ‘ fine ! ’ ‘ pretty ! ’ ‘ very fine ! ’ ‘ too much at once ! ’ At a little distance from them, towards the stern of the vessel, sat, ‘ solitary and alone,’ as a celebrated senator has it, a gentleman in a macintosh, buttoned up to the chin, supporting his body, which was bent forward, by a huge cane,

and keeping his eyes fixed on the ground in the deepest meditation.

“ This Pythagorean attitude and silence, which were admirably becoming a thinking Englishman, excited the mirth of all the passengers, and especially of the Germans, who ironically remarked ‘ that the English had a very philosophical way of travelling, always reasoning and reflecting when other people are satisfied with the mere looks of things.’

“ After the lapse of I should think an hour, the supposed Englishman, whose back must have ached considerably, drew himself up to his full height, enabling me to recognise in him a young gentleman of my acquaintance, who had gone to Europe for his health, and was at the same time carefully improving his manners. ‘ How long is it since you left * * * ?’ demanded I, rushing up to him in order to shake him by the hand. ‘ Hush !’ whispered he ; ‘ I have been coming down all the way from Strasbourg with these Englishmen here, and none of them has recognised me as an American.’

“ The fact is,” continued my cicerone, “ our higher classes, in spite of their continual croaking, have no other standard to go by but the English. They pique themselves on dressing like

80 SYMPATHY FOR THE HOUSE OF LORDS.

the English, talking like the English, thinking like the English, and behaving like the English, and on having English sentiments with regard to politics and religion. Some of 'the aristocracy' are even more orthodox than the English themselves; especially with regard to the Irish, who, since their emancipation, are much more unpopular with certain classes of Americans than O'Connell can possibly be in a British assembly of Tories.

"For the same reason have our aristocracy taken the House of Lords under their protection; 'because the English nobility is such a glorious institution!' 'it contributes so much to the national splendour!' and there are so many high families in America *connected* with the first people in England! They probably think that, as long as aristocracy finds a stronghold in the old institutions of Britain, there remains at least a hope of introducing something similar to them in the United States; but they forget that, from the historical aristocracy of England, to the nameless money-dealers of America, there is a greater transition than from the substance to the shadow of a thing. Incorporated companies and banks are as yet the only armories that furnish weapons to the chivalrous knights composing the nobility

of the New World; and there is scarcely an American squire that would not be willing to sell horse and lance provided a proper price be offered him.

“Another generic feature which marks our wealthy *parvenus*, while, at the same time, it furnishes a curious index to the human heart, is the little sympathy felt or expressed with regard to the enterprising Western settlers, and the contemptuous language held by our ‘respectable editors’ when speaking of those unfortunate exiles from the refinement of ‘the Old States.’ Mrs. Trollope’s caricatures of the ‘half-horse and half-alligator race make the reader laugh; those drawn in our own papers are calculated to make one *despise* them. They use precisely the same language formerly employed by British writers with regard to the early settlers of the American colonies: — ‘lawless adventurers,’ ‘fugitives from justice,’ ‘outcasts from society,’ ‘dregs of humanity,’ ‘candidates for the state’s prison or the gallows.’

“By these gentle appellations do the mushroom aristocracy of a few trading places stigmatise the steady, laborious, enterprising race of men that fertilize the Western wilderness, and create new markets for manufactures and commerce. Scarcely a couple of generations removed

from the original settlers, they already play the old families, without having in their ephemeral existence done *one* thing deserving to be recorded in history; for we cannot disguise the fact, that all we have thus far accomplished, all that distinguishes our people from the idle and vicious population of Europe, all that has contributed to our boundless national prosperity, is owing to the virtue, enterprise, and perseverance of the *labouring* classes, and in no small proportion to those very ‘adventurers’ whom our Atlantic satraps affect to despise.

“Our higher classes,” added my cicerone, “seldom get angry at foreigners for abusing their government in the abstract; but let any one attempt to prove that there are no elements for a different administration to be found amongst them, and they will raise a hue and cry against the audacious slanderer. Tell them that they are ‘no republicans,’ and they will feel themselves flattered, though they may pout like some affected prude with whom a man takes some pleasing liberty. But attack their *aristocracy*; say that it is a noisy, shapeless monster, with many tails and no head,—or, what is worse, say that you discover *no* aristocracy in the country,—and you will set them raving.

“I remember a poor, little, innocent woman who nearly fainted at a duke’s telling her that he had understood there was no *noblesse* in America; but merely an educated (?) wealthy *bourgeoisie*. Poor thing! she little expected such a mortification; and from such a quarter too! And yet she was a great stickler for human rights; just like some fashionable reformer, who can see no reason for the extraordinary prerogatives of the nobility, but is wide awake to the chasm which separates *him* from the multitude.

“We may safely call ourselves the vainest people on earth,” concluded my cicerone, “and yet we dare not have an opinion which is not sanctioned abroad. We constantly refer each other’s manners, doctrines, and principles to those which are current in Europe; but, when an European ventures to imitate our example, we cannot contain our wrath at his impertinence, We do not object to the standard of comparison, but to the comparison itself; because we claim for ourselves the exclusive faculty of arriving at just conclusions. Our best society is but a sorry caricature of that of Europe, and yet we get angry when an European attempts to depict it. Our fate is indeed the most singular. No one can understand us; and yet we are con-

stantly talking about ourselves, and throwing out hints as to where observers may look for an explanation of our manners. The good people of England especially seem, in reference to us, to be in precisely the same predicament as Dr. Johnson was with regard to the Scotch, — the more we talk, the less they know about us.”

CHAPTER IV.

A party of English Gentlemen at Dinner — their Patriotism. — Character of John Bull in America. — The Englishman's Speech. — The American Answer. — Modesty of British Commercial Agents in the United States. — Anecdote characteristic of the Second Society.

"Peace, I say! hear mine host of the Garter! Am I politic? Am I subtile? Am I a Machiavel? Shall I lose my doctor? No; he gives me the potions, and the motions. Shall I lose my parson? My priest? My Sir Hugh? No; he gives me the proverbs and the no-verbs."

Merry Wives of Windsor, Act iii. Scene 1.

TO-DAY I dined with an English gentleman, who had been settled a great number of years in the country, and was married to an American lady of very good family.

The company was composed principally of merchants and manufacturers, with an admixture of a few travelling agents of British commercial houses, whom it was not difficult to recognise as the lions of the party. They were not, properly speaking, members of the first society, because foreigners who are once married and

settled in the country seldom belong to it, unless they are immensely rich ; but they thought themselves nevertheless considerably above the second, not one of them having accepted an invitation to the latter for the last six months,—preferring infinitely no society at all to the degradation of mixing with inferior persons. Besides, one of them, having of late moved into “a more respectable neighbourhood,” was preparing to entertain his new fashionable acquaintance with a large, sumptuous party, which he hoped would at once open to his sons and daughters — “the old man and woman” are not so easily promoted—the road to the highest circles.

Dinner, which was one of the plainest I ever made in the United States, was served in the usual manner ; only that the gentleman of the house piqued himself on having everything cooked in the true English fashion. I believe he had a beef-steak brought upon the table for the sole purpose of showing the difference between the English and American ways of dressing it. “This is an English steak,” said he ; “at least you do not see it besmeared with rancid butter, and N.B. cooked with Liverpool coal.” The *roast beef* was recommended in the same manner, as being “roasted in the true English style ;”

and the same was said of the parboiled vegetables, and at last of the fire-proof pudding.

"I hope," said one of the gentlemen, who was an American at the head of a large manufacturing establishment, "none of our friends is troubled with dyspepsia."

"I like the English kitchen better than any other," replied our entertainer, "whatever preference my friends may give to the French or Italian."

"At any rate it is preferable to the American," observed another Englishman.

"And if not that, we at least know how to eat," remarked another.

"That," said our host, "no one will deny. The custom of eating against time exists only in America."

"Why," observed the manufacturer peevishly, "I have seen many an Englishman, sitting down at our public tables, play as good a knife and fork, and as quickly too, as one of our 'natives.'"

"That was done in self-defence," cried the Englishman, "if it was done at all."

"If the custom of dining at *tables d'hôte* existed in England," rejoined the manufacturer, "your people would soon learn *speed* and *ingenuity* in eating."

“ I hope, sir, such a custom will never be introduced.”

“ And then you forget that at a public table in America you frequently meet with people who, in England, would be content to make their dinner at a beef-shop.”

“ I often suspected something of the kind.”

“ Why, sir, this is a republican country ; we have no *public* distinction of classes.”

“ So much the worse for you.”

“ But is it not very strange,” observed the manufacturer, somewhat angrily, “ that you Englishmen, who come here for no other purpose in the world but to make money, who ‘ underwork and undersell’ us wherever you can, should be constantly railing against this country ? I have seen Scotchmen, Irishmen, Frenchmen, and Germans who were all satisfied to live amongst us and acquire property ; but I do not remember a single Englishman that was not constantly talking of the superiority of England over America. The English are the only foreigners that never become *bonâ fide* citizens. They always have a leaning towards their own country, however they may have forsworn their sovereign, and pledged fidelity and allegiance to the United States.”

“I consider all you have said as highly in our favour,” said our host.

“But I do not,” remarked the manufacturer. “I consider it downright perjury to come and settle amongst us,—to apply for the privileges of citizenship,—to go through the requisite formalities,—to pledge an oath of allegiance to the country,—to renounce publicly one’s former sovereign,—to exercise all the rights of native Americans conferred by these acts,—and then, after all, to remain a foreigner at heart, and to abuse this country whenever an opportunity presents itself of doing so with impunity. If you dislike this country so much, why do you stay in it?”

“Because I cannot do better,” replied the Englishman.

“That’s an old, but nevertheless a good one,” remarked one of the company.

“Oh!” exclaimed the manufacturer, “we know *your* principles well enough. Your John-Bullism is past redemption.”

“I trust it is,” said the gentleman, colouring to his ears. “Nothing, God willing, shall transform me into a Yankee!”

“But you are married in this country; you have children born in America;—what country-

men shall *they* be? They cannot be called Englishmen, I am sure."

"I am sorry for it; but that is not my fault. I will, at least, give them an *English education*."

"Pray, are you a naturalized citizen?"

"I have never perjured myself," replied the sturdy representative of John Bull.

"But did I not see you the other day at the polls?"

"I did not vote, I merely distributed tickets."

"What a nice distinction this is; you did not vote, you merely electioneered!"

"That was done from principle."

"What principle can that be? What interest can you take in our politics without being a citizen?"

"I have no interest at all in it. I merely do my duty by exerting myself to the utmost of my power to insure the election of the worst candidates, in order that you may the sooner be cured of your republican notions."

"If this is really your object, you ought to have been lynched long ago."

"I tell this merely to my friends."

"Pray, do not quarrel with him," interrupted one of the guests, addressing himself to the manu-

facturer ; “ our friend has always exerted himself on *your side* of the question.”

“ That is a fact,” observed another. “ Though you start from apparently very different premises, and appear to have very different motives, there is really no great difference between you in the end ; so I think you had better shake hands, and drink to *England and the United States !*”

“ England and the United States !” echoed the company.

“ England and the United States !” repeated our host ; “ and may the latter never forget *what they owe* to the former !”

“ John Bull to the back-bone !” cried the manufacturer. “ All in his own house too !”

“ But is it true,” demanded another Englishman, who, I was told, was an ironmonger, “ that Mr. * * * is not yet naturalized ?”

“ I am,” said he, “ to all intents and purposes a *British subject*.”

“ That’s no answer to my question,” replied the ironmonger ; “ a man may be a British subject, and still for all purposes in *this* country a naturalized American. I am a citizen of *both* countries. I hold real estate in Nova Scotia and in the United States.”

“ Then you do not hold it according to law.”

“Pshaw!” ejaculated the ironmonger, “who cares for that? Millions of acres of land in this country belong to foreigners.”

“But you cannot be a *bonâ fide* holder of real estate in the United States without being a citizen, and you cannot become a citizen without renouncing all allegiance to foreign countries. You must have perjured yourself with regard to England or America.”

“Poh! poh! Talk of perjury in such matters! It’s a sort of custom-house oath which binds a person no farther than his word. I would not be such a fool as to give up my rights as a British subject. Times may change;—would you have me put all my eggs into one basket?”

“A nice creed this!” cried the manufacturer; “and such are the men that govern our elections! And you vote just like the rest of us?”

“And why should I not?”

“Pray, don’t quarrel,” said the same mediator that had before reconciled the manufacturer with our host; “*he*, too, votes on *your* side. Why do you scrutinize his motives if his *acts* coincide with your own? *England and the United States!* I say,—*their interests are one and the same; may they never be divided by party spirit!*”

This toast was drunk with all the honours;

after which the gentleman of the house rose, and made, as far as I can recollect, the following *speech*:—

“Gentlemen,

“I am glad to see that you are by degrees coming to your senses. You cannot but agree with me, that it is the best policy of the United States to cultivate the friendship of Great Britain. It is, I am sure, the wisest thing you can do, after having been so foolish as to separate from us. As for *us*, we do not care three straws for that separation ; we can get *along* without you.”

“That’s an Americanism,” remarked one of the company: “he is a stickler for Old England, and talks of going *along*!”

“I plead guilty to the charge,” replied the host. “The fact is, I have been so long in the United States that I have almost forgotten the English language.”

“Go on, sir ! Go on !” cried the company ; “never mind the language.”

“Well, gentlemen, I said we did not care three straws for that separation ; neither do we, for our annual commercial balances against you are now greater than they ever were before the revolution. I only wish we could get rid of Canada in the

same way. As for your *independence*, it's all my eye and Betty Martin, as the saying goes, as long as you borrow money, and we are the ones that lend it you. A man in debt has lost his freedom, and the same holds of a nation.

“As regards the good understanding which exists between England and the United States, it is based, I am sure, on the most rational basis : the creditor likes to see his debtor prosper, in order that he may have a chance of being paid ; and the debtor does not wish to break with his creditor, in order that the latter may not be too hard upon him, and, perhaps, trust him again. This, I believe, is all the sympathy which exists between the two countries at present ; the antagonistical principles of their respective governments admitting of none other. With regard to myself, gentlemen, I can only say that, as the partner of an English house, I have always found the Americans an honest, clever, enterprising people ; a little too enterprising by the by, especially with regard to manufactures” (here he cast a side glance at the representative of ‘ the American system ’) ; “but, as this has done *them* more harm than *us*, I am not disposed to quarrel with them. The Americans are, no doubt, our best customers ; for which reason we like to see them in Liverpool, Manches-

ter, Leeds, &c. in precisely the same manner as we Englishmen meet with more civility in Boston, New York, Philadelphia, and Baltimore, than in any other part of the Union. This is all natural enough; and, in proportion as *trade* increases, our *friendship* must increase with it: and as I, for one, am really disposed to promote the latter as far as lies in *my* power, I will give you ‘The trade between England and America!’”

The trade between England and America was then drunk in a bumper; when, after sundry coughs and expectorations, the manufacturer rose and delivered himself in these terms:—

“Gentlemen,

“I am a manufacturer,—I presume you all know what that means; and I am *proud* to be one.” (To the host.) “I think, sir, that without manufactures this country would be entirely dependent on Great Britain. Our manufactures, sir, make us independent; without manufactures we should still be the slaves of the old country.” (“Oh, oh!” and cries of “Go on, go on!”) “But, sir, I will go further; I will come to the point; I will go beyond it! What, sir, would become of this country without manufactures in case of a war with England?”—(Several gentlemen, “We don’t want

war ; we want peace.”)—“ Gentlemen, if you interrupt me, I will sit down.”

(“ No, no ! go on ! Let us have it in true style.”)

“ Well, gentlemen, I have asked the gentleman what would become of us without manufactures in case of a war ? Here is a question ! will you answer me that ? Can you deny that our manufactures are destined at some future day not only to compete with those of England, but to *beat* them ? And as to the insinuation, sir, that the establishment of manufactures has hurt this country, I look upon it with scorn ; and what is worse than scorn, with *pity*,—nay, with perfect contempt.”

(Cries of, “ That is personal ; ” “ that won’t do, Mr. * * * ; you are out of order.”)

“ If I was out of order, I am sorry for it ; I did not mean to be personal ; I only wished to state the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. The gentleman hinted that we have not enough capital or perseverance to carry on that branch of industry ; at least, I understood him to say so ; but *I guess* he will find himself mistaken. If we have not enough perseverance, we have at least ‘ an awful sight of hang-on.’ ” (Shouts of “ That’s right ; give it to him ! ” and

laughter.) “But, sir, I gladly reciprocate; nay, I feel absolutely obliged to you for the kind sentiments you expressed in reference to this country. I hope the friendship between England and this country will be eternal; I mean to say, *I trust* it will last for ever. England cannot but *profit* by it, and so must *we*. Why then should we be eternally quarrelling with one another. I can see no good arising from it in any shape; so far from it, on the contrary, *a pretty considerable deal* of evil.

“It has been the custom of a few ignorant Englishmen to underrate the American character; but *I calculate* the English *nation* had nothing to do with it, and must, since Lord Brougham’s establishment of common schools, have learnt the true character of our people. But, as I always say, gentlemen, there is not the least cause of enmity between us. We both speak the same language, and were originally one and the same people; we intermarry and trade with one another; and, in short, do all things which mark us as civilized nations. On this account, gentlemen, and because it does not behove a Christian people (as one of our orators said), even in time of war, to harbour any ill will towards one an-

other,* I give you, gentlemen, and I trust it may be a sentiment to which you will all cordially respond,—‘ Success to the enterprise of both countries ; and may they never forget *their common stock!*’ ”

“ A fine *stump speaker*† this !” observed one of the Americans.

“ Rather too *Kentuckical*, though,” remarked another ; “ but the fact is, there are so many *nice* shades of our meaning, that we cannot express them in any other language.”

I again saw my cicerone in the evening, and related to him the conversation I had listened to, expressing my surprise at the continual feuds between the English and Americans.

“ This ought not to astonish you,” observed he : “ most of the commercial agents, who come here either to settle or to reside, find themselves, for the first time in their lives, in what is called ‘ the first society,’ apparently on a par with our most influential, *i. e.* moneyed citizens. This, of

* Mr. Quincy was, during the last war, one of the leading members of the opposition ; and, as such, introduced a resolution “ that it was unbecoming a Christian people to exult in the triumphs over their enemies.” This resolution was afterwards voted to be erased from the journal of the house.

† One who speaks *extempore* ; because in the Western country they use the stump of a tree for a rostrum.

course, strikes them as extraordinary, and leads them to the conclusion that the first society in America must be essentially different from the society called ‘the first’ in England or Europe in general; to which they could not, possibly, procure themselves an introduction. This, as you may perceive, must be the natural effect of their modesty, for which you ought not to blame them, and for which I, for one, am rather disposed to give them credit; especially as I have seen the same persons, who in America flourished in the most fashionable circles, on their return to England not even admitted to the society of a London club, but content with a place in the counting-room of their employers, and a table in a city coffee-room. Though occasionally thrown into the company of *our* statesmen, they never approached, by chance, a member of parliament in their own country; and, although here considered as men of ability, they were satisfied with living in obscurity at home.

“As regards their political opinions,” he continued, “few of them, I believe, have received a liberal education, so as to be able to view our institutions with an enlarged, impartial mind, or to separate an accidental evil from the general good of which they may be productive to the great

mass of the people. Instead of seeing in our government a practical illustration of the political doctrines abstracted from the experience of all countries and of every age, they view in it only a modification of the government of England, and apply to it the scale of their own country.

“For this we can the less blame them, as many of our most distinguished statesmen and politicians take precisely the same view of our institutions; referring them constantly to the British model, and considering nothing as legitimate which cannot be directly traced to, or deduced from, a similar institution in Great Britain. If you believe them, no other people but the English are born with a political understanding or forecast: why then should the English, who come here, not apply the same doctrines also to the Americans? and why should they not, occasionally, join our own fashionable people in depreciating the advantages of our government, and speak disrespectfully of those whom ourselves are accustomed to treat with so little ceremony?

“When the English, who come here to live among us, declare our government a mere experiment, and our institutions destructive to the ends of society, they re-echo but the sentiments of our first people, whom they are obliged to imitate if

they wish to be considered fashionable ; for, believe me, an Englishman who would praise our government, and who in consequence would be suspected of Radicalism, would be infinitely less popular in Boston than one who, by abusing us, proves himself to have belonged to the fashionable school of politics in his own country.

“ The great evil of our society consists in its being constantly acted upon by two entirely heterogeneous principles, — the democratic institutions of the country impelling our people one way, while the aristocratic aspirings of the upper classes communicate to them an impulse in the opposite direction. The resulting motion, therefore, is neither *straight forward*, nor directly ascending ; but a sort of compromising diagonal, which in the inimitable language of our people is characteristically called ‘ *slantendicular*.’

“ This is the great historical origin of the doctrine of double motives which sways our best society ; and which is, perhaps, the principal cause of all the incongruities, contradictions, and downright absurdities for which we have been ridiculed by Europeans. I, for my own part, tell you frankly that I dislike in the extreme the ‘ *slantendicular*’ conduct of certain classes. I prefer a downright aristocracy with *avowed*

motives and principles, to a jesuitical nobility of ‘influential citizens.’ You must respect the perseverance and iron consequence of a Duke of Wellington ; but you cannot but despise the cringing pride of *our* Tory politicians. If we are doomed to have artificial distinctions,—if we must have an aristocracy after the model of that of Europe,—let us, for mercy’s sake ! *import it ready made* ; the gradual process of growing it ourselves is too tedious, and the minute details too disgusting, not to put the best of us out of humour.

“ I never want to see an aristocrat until he is ready to put on white gloves ; our ‘ungloved,’ ‘unwashed’ aristocrats are to me an object of horror. No tyranny is more odious than that of an overgrown *bourgeoisie*. Being less removed from the lower classes, their tyranny is more felt ; and not being placed sufficiently above competition, they are incapable of taking any lofty, disinterested views with regard to the government of the people, whom they half fear and half despise. These faults, at least, are among those which are seldom to be found in an hereditary aristocracy, until it becomes reduced to a position in which it is obliged to enter with the people on a contest for power.

*

*

*

*

“ Having told you so much about our ‘ first people,’ ” said my cicerone, taking a bottle from his closet, and filling two glasses with I do not now remember what, “ I will, as a *pendant* to them, relate to you an anecdote which will throw some light also on our *second* society. Only let us drink fast, and let me soon remove the glasses ; I should not like my servants to know that I am in a habit of taking a thing of this kind. There is no use in making one’s self unpopular, you know.

“ The town of Boston,” he commenced, “ if it were not already remarkable as the ‘ cradle of liberty,’ and the place where the first American *tea-party* was given, would long ago have become so by the hospitality and convivial talents of its inhabitants.

“ At the South-end of the town, at the very spot where General Washington raised a fort from which he forced the departure of the British army, stands now, not a monument to commemorate the deed, but an excellent hotel, where a man may get the best things in the shape of viands and wines, if he be willing to pay for them. To this place, called ‘ Mount Washington Hotel,’ many an excellent family, probably out of patriotism, retires in the summer, not only to

enjoy the sea-breeze, and to escape from the noise of the town, but also in order to be able to say that they have spent the summer at a watering-place; New Port, Longbranch, and Saratoga Springs being much more expensive, and society too exclusive to enable people of moderate fortune to participate in the entertainments of the season. The Washington Hotel, therefore, is frequented by such gentlemen and ladies as have acquired competency without wealth, respectability without family dating of more than one generation, and a common-place routine of fashion without having had the advantage of a trip to Europe, — in short, by such as in Boston form the second society, and with whom the first society never, even by chance, exchange any kind of civility.

“Notwithstanding these apparent disadvantages,” continued my cicerone, filling himself another glass, “nothing could be prettier than this second society if its members could be made to agree amongst themselves. This, however, is altogether out of the question, owing to the numerous coteries and subdivisions to which it is again subjected. Our second society, namely, has again its first, second, and third rank, each of which is again subdivided into still smaller circles,

which are again numbered ; so that it requires the nicety of a mathematician to ascertain what sort of company a man is likely to be with when invited to a party. Owing to this trifling circumstance, the members of the second society live with each other somewhat after the manner of cats and dogs ; making but too frequently foreigners witnesses of their broils, and affording them, as will appear from my story, occasionally an opportunity of acting the peace-makers.

“An instance of this kind happened last year, when a Polish gentleman arriving in Boston, and finding the town too hot in the summer, was induced to take up his residence at the ‘Washington Hotel,’ which he was told, and with great justice too, furnished excellent accommodations at moderate prices, and commanded a fine view of the harbour.

“Scarcely had he removed thither, before his being announced ‘as a count,’ ‘a real count,’ ‘a count that was *known* to be a count,’ and who had brought letters proving him to be ‘every inch a count,’ caused such a sensation in the house, that the ladies refused to eat, drink, and even *talk*, except in company of ‘the count.’ The count could not but be flattered by these attentions, and in turn omitted nothing by which

to testify his gratitude. He listened with the utmost patience to the accounts of their chivalrous ancestors,—for in Boston even the second society have *ancestors*,—sat without opening his lips when they mutually abused one another, and with incredible skill managed to remain on good terms with the various sets, divisions, and subdivisions, whose every-day regret it was to be obliged, ‘owing to the ridiculous American custom,’ *to dine together at the same table*.

“At last the melancholy hour drew near when the count was about to depart. When this sad intelligence was received, the ladies, with that tenderness which belongs to their sex, and the peculiar generosity which marks ‘the second society,’ determined to pay to the count a tribute of their respect, and accordingly met in conclave to consult as to the best manner of manifesting their sentiments. At first, the first section of the second society met, and agreed to give the count *a ball*. Then came the second, then the third, then again the *élite* of each section; and, wonderful! on this subject they all agreed.

“It was therefore intimated to the count that he must defer his departure until after the ball, to which the cavalier readily consented; assuring the ladies that their kindness should be engraven

on his heart, and that he should never forget the amicable reception he had met with in Boston. The rest of my story is easily told. The evening was fixed for the party, the ‘ladies patronesses’ chosen from each set, (because, the count having been polite to all, none could very well be omitted,) and invitations sent out to three or four hundred people to pay to the count the tribute due to his rank and quality.

“At last the appointed evening arrived. The ball was superb,—the hall magnificently decorated,—the music exquisite,—the refreshments in excellent taste and in the greatest profusion. There was also a supper;—not indeed equal to one of Crockford’s, but, notwithstanding, nice, delicate, blending the French with the English art of cookery, and arranged in a style worthy of a *prince*. The selection of madeira and sherry corresponded with the supper; and there was a profusion of iced champaign for the ladies. The whole went off prosperously, with the exception of a single mistake; which, however, the count did not discover till the next morning, when the landlord, stepping into his room, presented him with a small piece of paper containing the disagreeable item of—

“ ‘To Ball, 1000 dollars.’

“The count was stupified,—changed colour,—declared that the ball had been given to him, and that he had nothing to do with settling the bill.

“The landlord withdrew; handed the bill to the ‘ladies patronesses,’ and respectfully demanded an explanation. Hereupon a grand meeting of all the sets was immediately convened, at which the best understanding prevailed throughout, the whole assembly coming to the unanimous resolution ‘that the count was a shabby fellow.’

“The day following, the count paid the bill and quitted the hotel, without leaving a single p. p. c. for any of its inmates.”

Here my cicerone finished his glass, locked the bottle and the empty tumblers carefully up in the closet, and, having put the key in his pocket, told me in the most solemn voice that it was not the custom in Boston to keep late hours, and that, in order not to lose his reputation as a moral man, he was now obliged to wish me a good night.

CHAPTER V.

A Literary Party. — The American Press. — Character of Editors — their Rise and Progress. — Influence of Advertisements. — Old and New Federalists. — Mode of operating on the People.

“A field of glory is a field for all.”

POPE'S *Dunciad*.

I PASSED an evening at the house of a genuine specimen of a Yankee, — at a sort of literary party, to which nearly the whole Boston tribe of the quill were invited; the master of the house being well able to act as president. My Boston friends, on reading this, will imagine I refer to a gentleman in B * * * -street; but I can assure them that they are mistaken. I do not mean a man who has at once been promoted to the rank of king of literature, master of the pamphlet and magazine writers of New England, by his wealth and the agreeable manners he acquired in Europe; but a hard-working man, who served his apprenticeship in a printer's shop, and by dint of perseverance and talent became one of the most

powerful organs of public opinion, and a correct English writer. His politics were, from the beginning, those of the Federal school, but honest ; his style clear and flowing, his arguments logical and to the point ; and he possessed a fund of wit and humour to season the productions of his pen. In his younger days he submitted himself to the arduous and unprofitable task of exposing some of the most glaring follies of his countrymen ; for which, though he became in an eminent degree a public benefactor, he was frequently sued for libel, and condemned to heavy fines. Notwithstanding these reverses he had prospered, and become the father of a large family, most of the members of which were distinguished for great ability.

On this occasion he had convened his friends and acquaintances in order to communicate to them his resolution to add a new monthly periodical to the list of those already in existence, and to ask their contribution to so laudable an undertaking. He also told them that for one year at least he was ready to continue it at a loss, remunerating liberally the best papers on politics and *belles lettres*, to which he proposed to direct his principal attention.

The proposition was received with enthusiasm

by the whole company. They agreed unanimously that such an undertaking was highly patriotic, and that the time being was particularly propitious to an undertaking of that sort; that the condition of the country, and the progress of literature and science in the United States, "loudly call for such a periodical," &c.; and, as a mark of their sincerity, pledged their entertainer in a bumper of hock, which seemed to augur favourably for their taste and judgment.

While they were thus engaged in expressing their sympathy with literature and the arts, I had an opportunity of observing their countenances, which partook of the usual shrewdness of New-Englanders, but were otherwise far from being remarkable or striking. Fortunately for my democratic sentiments, they were all representatives of the Whig or American Tory press; though some of the *English* editors of that denomination would not, perhaps, feel flattered by this extension of the fraternity.

What was most interesting to me was, the little ease which prevailed amongst them; none seeming to know his true position. They approached each other with great caution, as if they dreaded each other's malice. I am sure they did not venture a single expression which they would not

have liked to see in print. In addition to this, they watched each other's motions, and the greater or less degree of intimacy which existed between their entertainer and his invited colleagues; in short, they wanted nothing but tact and manners to pass for a tolerable body of diplomatists at a provincial court in Germany.

I could not help making some reflections on those poor mortals, who, like other players, "fretted their hour upon the stage;" though their *parts* were not many, and the play but too often not worth the candle. I believe I am not altogether wrong in asserting that the American daily press, though its influence on national politics is prodigious, is nevertheless in its composition, character, and moral force, scarcely to be compared to the mass of talent employed in this branch of literature in Europe.

There is scarcely a paper in any of the large cities of the United States which has a decided political character—advocating some great historical principle, and employing in its warfare other weapons than common-placedialectics, and constant appeals to the passions of its subscribers. The effect produced by the American papers is due to their number; there being not one of them which can boast of a subscription sufficiently large

to make it a true representative of public opinion. Their power is owing to combination. No great central institution has as yet taken the lead ; but they have a wonderful faculty in communicating each other's ideas, either by direct quotations or by dressing up the same thought in a variety of manners. An American paper, in fact, is said to be edited *with great talent* when it contains in each number from half a column to a column of original matter : the rest consists of extracts and advertisements. The latter constitute the pecuniary resources of an editor ; the subscriptions being so low that, unless a "fair advertising patronage" can be obtained, little profit or absolute loss must necessarily attend the publication.

From this single circumstance the leading character of American newspapers may at once be inferred. The commercial part of the community advertise the most,—their interests, therefore, are sure to be advocated ; while those principles which refer to the higher branches of statesmanship or political economy are rarely made the subject of newspaper controversy, except perhaps in the Southern States. The Southerners are the only people in the Union who study politics as a science, having both the education and

leisure for that purpose. The Southern papers, therefore, are, on an average, much better edited than those of the North ; though from their higher standard, and the peculiar composition of Southern society, they have comparatively a small number of readers.

The practical men at the North call the Southerners, and especially the Virginians, “ Meta-physical politicians,” in contradistinction to those whose immediate object is the increase of trade and traffic. The Northern papers advocate each only *a particular part* of a political system : one, a bank of fifty millions ; another, one of forty millions ; one, a bank in New York ; another, one in Philadelphia, &c. just as it suits the convenience of their subscribers. It is not the press which leads the public,—it is the public which leads the press. What is likely to succeed — that principle which promises to become popular, which gratifies the peculiar *penchant* of the leading portion of the public, is sure to be maintained, if not with spirit, at least with great obstinacy ; but a great truth, which is not yet universally received, which meets with a strong opposition from wealth and prejudice, which is calculated to benefit future generations and not the present one, often pleads in vain for a single enunciation

in a daily print. The proverb, "*Point d'argent, point de Suisses*," applies as much to the gentlemen of the press as to the hired soldiers of Helvetia ; with this difference only, that, once engaged in fight, they do not always defend their masters with the same unalterable faith and courage.

The fact is, a truth which clashes with the interests of a certain portion of society is seldom introduced by men not entirely independent in their circumstances ; and for this reason a powerful aristocracy, or an absolute monarchy, has often done more for the emancipation of a people than could have been effected by the variously-directed efforts of the wealthy middle classes. The history of all countries up to the present day furnishes ample proofs of this assertion, and the state of America itself forms no exception to the rule.

The Southern planters, who, not without cause, are reproached with aristocratic principles and sentiments, are nevertheless the stronghold of American liberty, without which the variety of commercial, manufacturing, and agricultural interests would soon produce a conflict of principles, which would ultimately endanger the Union. The very opposition to the Southern interests

obliges the higher classes of the North to live in peace with the inferior orders.

The industrious labourer at the North has no better ally than the Southern planter, who, from his position, is more independent, more generous, and better able to protect him against the rich monopolist than the *roturier*, who is his competitor. From the South emanated all the democratic measures, together with the doctrine of the sovereignty of the people as it is now understood in the United States. Southern statesmen advocated the rights of the poor; and broke down the monopoly of trade and manufactures, which threatened to enrich one class of citizens at the expense of all the rest.

There is a species of republicanism which may assume all the odious features of aristocracy; and there is an aristocracy, in the true sense of the word, which may act as a stimulus to liberty and national honour. If there be one truth which the history of modern times has proved beyond the possibility of a doubt, it is this,—that the wealthy *bourgeoisie*, where it succeeded in obtaining power, has been a ruder tyrant of the lower classes than the hereditary nobility whom it deprived of their political influence. As my friend truly observed,—the more nearly an aristocracy is allied to the people, the

more intolerable are its presumptions ; the less are these qualities redeemed by refinement, education, and that peculiar sense of honour which, even at the worst stage of corruption, seldom entirely quits those descended from a long line of ancestors. If Michel Chevalier is right in believing that the nature of man is too corrupt to be governed by a pure democracy, then I would, with my Boston cicerone, prefer at once an aristocracy of family and *hereditary* property, with chivalrous notions of honour and justice, to a cold, calculating preponderance of moneyed men, which, though it may to a certain extent stimulate enterprise and industry, establishes nevertheless a mean *numerical* scale of worth, the most distressing of all to the lofty aspirations of high-minded men.

The aristocratic *super-position* of society, as it exists in Europe and in the Southern States of America, has far less tendency to circumscribe the liberty of the people* than the democratic *juxta-position* of different ranks and fortunes, with an incessant *struggle* for individual distinction. In short, I prefer the white-gloved democrat of the South, with his *aristocratic* bearing, to the ungloved aristocrat of the North, with his republican hu-

* These remarks can, of course, only be understood as applying to the *white* population of those States.

mility, and his cravings after popularity and power.

“ Ourself and Bushy, Bagot here and Green,
Observed his courtship to the common people,—
How he did seem to dive into their hearts
With humble and familiar courtesy ;—
What reverence he did throw away on slaves,
Wooing poor craftsmen with the craft of smiles,
And patient underbearing of his fortune,
As ’twere to banish their effects with him.
Off goes his bonnet to an oyster wench ;
A brace of draymen bid—God speed him well !
And has the tribute of his supple knee
With ‘ *Thanks, my countrymen, my loving friends !* ’ ”

As I was thus pondering on the relative merits of the North and South, I observed a gentleman whom I had once met in a stage-coach talking to the master of the house in a manner from which it was easy to infer that *I* formed the subject of their conversation. Shortly after he rushed up to me, and, seizing both my hands,

“ Don’t you remember me ? ” exclaimed he ;
“ we travelled together in the same coach from Baltimore to Washington.”

I was glad to find some one to converse with freely, without being every third word stopped by such phrases as these : “ Why, sir ! I don’t exactly know ; ” “ I sometimes think ; ” “ I am half inclined to suppose ; ” “ I rather guess ; ” “ I

should *swan*," (for, " I should swear,") &c.; or cross-examined as to my intentions, views, inclinations, tastes, and habits, which I knew would be considered as absurd if they did not entirely correspond with the stereotype patterns of the leading moralists of the city. During my stay in Boston I have often felt gratified with the attention shown me by many of its inhabitants; and there are, perhaps, few cities which, in proportion to their population, can boast of so large a number of educated men and women: but I cannot refrain from alluding to the want of moral independence, not only in their private and public acts, but also in their *conversation*. I communicated these thoughts to the Carolinian, who, seizing both my hands, exclaimed,

" You have spoken my very heart. I could live twenty years in this city without feeling myself at home in it. There is a degree of ceremoniousness, watchfulness, and prudence, even in the hospitality of these people, which destroys that familiar conviviality to which we are accustomed at the South. The same holds of the women. There is a certain severity—*une rigueur poussée trop loin*—about the loveliest faces in New England, which acts as a disenchanter on enthusiasm. You gaze, you admire, you respect; but you are

almost *afraid* to love ; such a distance does there seem between yourself and the object of your fancy."

From these topics our conversation turned on literature and the representatives of the press.

" Our editors," said he, " think themselves competent for the solution of every question, whether it refer to politics or poetry, to the settlement of the Western country or to Greek and Roman archæology. Once armed with a quill, they care not whom they meet in the arena. Fortunately it is their practice to praise indiscriminately every book, pamphlet, or poem, of which a copy is sent them ' for notice ;' except when the author attacks their favourite doctrines, or pretends to be wiser than themselves. In such cases they exhibit an *esprit du corps*, and woe to the unfortunate offender that provokes a power so formidable ! Not only will judgment be pronounced on him *editorially* ; but also in an infinite number of *anonymous* articles, furnished by the legion of literary twaddles which surround our ' independent press,' and claim the occasional insertion of a squib as a *bonus* for the amount of their annual subscription. This species of assassination is considered perfectly lawful, and is practised by lawyers, physicians, clergymen, mer-

chants, manufacturers, and tradespeople of all sorts. Whoever subscribes to a paper considers himself *the editor's patron*, and obliges the latter to give publicity to his dull lucubrations.

“An editor, in order to reject these voluntary contributions, must be very independent in his circumstances, or possess a fund of wit and sarcasm to make people afraid of him, as is, for instance, the case with our entertainer; but by far the majority are glad to avail themselves of these opportunities of filling their columns without personal exertion or trouble. You know how the democratic tendency of Cooper's novels was treated in our prints; how the youths of our colleges, and the clerks of our dry-goods-men, exerted themselves to the utmost to counteract their pernicious tendency.”*

“I do not remember many of those newspaper squibs,” said I; “but I think Cooper showed very little taste or good sense in answering them at large in ‘*A Letter to my Countrymen.*’”

“And in republishing that letter in England,” added the Carolinian; “making the English

* Since Mr. Cooper's last publications on France, Italy, Switzerland, &c. he is less abused by his countrymen. The nice things he tells them about the *palaces* of Europe, and the society of princes to which he *himself* was invited, have put the critics in good-humour with the author.

public judge between himself and the American people."

"And yet, what remedy has an American author in such a case, except to appeal from a small and prejudiced public to a large and liberal one?"

"I do not think," rejoined the Carolinian, "the English public is much more liberal than our own. But, then, in England every man sticks to his trade, so that the criticism of the periodical press, and even of the daily papers, proceed at least from persons competent to judge, and who have made literature their principal occupation in life. If it were not for English critics, we should not know or esteem our own poets; for it is only after they have acquired a standing *there*, that they are admitted into society in this country. I remember what an American lady from this very city told a gentleman in Paris, when she heard a certain bard was visiting the highest society in England: 'I cannot conceive of it,' said she; 'he never visited in the first society *with us*.' 'Then,' observed a sarcastic Scotchman, 'the first society in England must be very differently constituted from the first society in America.'"

"You are too severe on your own countrymen," said I.

“ I am accustomed to speak my opinion frankly,” replied the Southerner. “ How many of the gentlemen present do you think fit to edit a respectable paper in England ?”

“ That is a difficult question.”

“ Oh, not at all, sir ! I will answer it for you. Hardly one besides our entertainer, who, though perhaps no longer equal to what he was, possesses, nevertheless, more business tact, and writes better English, than any one of his colleagues. And yet all these men have pretensions to literature, and imagine themselves capable of judging the literary productions of others. What man of talent would under such circumstances not rather appeal to England, and be judged by his peers, than trust to the decisions of his countrymen ? The greatest praise of the American press is, after all, but a dubious testimony of an author’s merits, even with a great portion of the American public ; while its censure becomes doubly severe from the circumstance of its rare occurrence, and the great ease with which it may be avoided. I remember an instance in which one of this gallant body of editors ‘ cut up ’ a book, and that too one which has since been republished in England, merely because the author had forgotten to send him a copy ; — a tribute which no poor devil of a

writer ought to forget to pay to those sovereign princes of literature, if he do not wish to see himself damned. But, if the work has once gone through an edition in *England*, all is hushed in silence ; for, although we declaim continually against British influence, we have scarcely an editor who dares to hold an opinion different from that of the English public. The love of independence is, indeed, inherent in them ; but in such matters a mere *declaration* does not answer the purpose."

"And what is the usual career of one of your editors?" demanded I.

"That is easily told," replied he. "A man fails in business, or is otherwise unfortunate; he does not succeed in his profession, or has had some other falling-out with the world. Then he turns politician, and commences generally by being a democrat. Democracy is the easiest and best commencement of a politician. He is serving his apprenticeship with the people, as a young physician first practises on the poor before he ventures his skill on those who are able to pay him. The majority of our 'most respectable editors' commenced in this manner, by advocating 'the greatest good to the greatest number;' but, once brought into notice, the transition from

Radicalism to Whiggism, and from that to Toryism, is effected with little difficulty.

“ You may always doubt a democratic editor’s sincerity when his *advertisements* begin to increase. He is then sure of making himself agreeable to a certain portion of the *commercial* community, and to meet soon with the proper reward of his new political faith. You may then expect to see him promoted in society and on ’change ; and ten chances to one he will be able to settle with his creditors. After that, he begins to differ in one or the other point from the leading principles of the democratic party, (for it is seldom that a man changes *at once* from a democrat to a Whig,) until by degrees he renounces the whole doctrine as unworthy ‘ of a gentleman and a scholar.’ Then he begins his abuse against the *mob*, declaiming loudly against anarchy and usurpation ; because new converts to a doctrine must show more zeal than those who have been brought up in it, and in order to exhibit their contempt for the class of society from which they themselves have sprung. These abuses are afterwards returned with interest by those who have remained faithful to their cause, or who have not yet had a chance of promotion. Hence arises a newspaper controversy, which is neither calculated to

elevate the style of our writers, nor to throw much light on the great principles for which they are contending. After subtracting the personal abuse and common party slang of our papers, there remains scarcely enough matter to elicit one generous thought, or a single truth capable of adding to our political knowledge.

“Our editors are so much bent on discussing men and characters, that they scarcely ever find time for examining a principle; and hence it is that foreigners not acquainted with our public men cannot form a correct notion of our politics. It is our boast that Europeans do not understand our institutions; but I believe the same reproach applies to ourselves, and particularly to our editors. How many of these, I would ask, understand the true meaning of aristocracy and democracy? and what historical idea do they associate with these terms?

“Immediately after the revolutionary war, we had Whigs and Tories; that is, men that were honest enough openly to avow their sentiments. These *had* a political system, and defended it logically with philosophical arguments. And I will be sincere with you: a large portion of our public men *was* then inclined towards Whiggism, or rather to a moderate Toryism, as might have

been expected from a people principally descended from England, and versed only in the British school of politics. These men, however, soon discovered the impossibility of establishing, in America, a government after the English model. Their principles and doctrines became unpopular; until, at last, their motives were suspected, and they themselves held up as traitors to the country.

“ The French revolution had given a fresh impulse to the democracy of the country; and the champions of the old school—the Federalists as they were called — were obliged to leave the field to their victorious antagonists. Since that period their party has tried to *smuggle* itself into power. They assumed a variety of insignificant names by which to deceive the multitude, and within the last few years sailed under false colours. They are no longer the plain honest men who come out with their principles in broad daylight; they do not advocate openly and manly the system they once gloried in, but only certain detached parts of it. They administer their politics to the people, like some disagreeable medicine, in exceedingly small doses, in order not to disgust the public stomach.

“ The great majority of editors are, in every re-

spect, the mere tools of party. They do not set up or maintain a principle, they merely spread it over a wider surface. Their *modus operandi* consists in appealing to the passions of the multitude, upon whose decision their success mainly depends ; and the same is the case with our statesmen. The democrats may do so without apparent inconsequence ; they *acknowledge* the people as their sovereign, and may do them homage : but when a party, which agrees in nothing except in the conviction that the people are unfit to govern, bends its knees before that very people in order humbly to crave some of the offices and distinctions in its gift, then I can no longer remain an indifferent spectator ; I feel indignant at the base conduct of these crafty flatterers, and become ashamed of the principles of the party to which my whole family and myself have always belonged.”

“ You are a Federalist then ? ” demanded I.

“ Yes, sir, one of the *old* school ; for I believe that an aristocracy not linked with, but, on the contrary, separated and opposed to the people, must for ever remain powerless ; and that the people of no country are to be won by empty praise and sycophancy, but by the conferring of some substantial benefit.”

“ Our rich people do not even understand how to strike the lower classes with the exhibition of wealth and splendour ; a practice which is rarely entirely without effect when that exhibition benefits a large number of tradespeople. So far from seeking the appearance of liberality, they hoard money in the most miserly manner ; as if the mere possession of wealth, and not the skilful application of it, were capable of procuring them political influence. There is not a branch of industry in which they are not striving to grind the face of the poor, and yet they expect the latter to promote their interests ! Nothing but an entire stupefaction of the people can ever make them attain their object. The people give nothing without an equivalent, and are only rendered more obstinate by the fine speeches and flattery of those who pretend to be their superiors. In one word, our aristocrats are fond of power and distinction ; but they are unwilling to pay for them. Money is, and remains, their highest consideration ; and the acquisition of it the principal object of their lives. Hence the privilege of making money, and of borrowing and lending it, has become the rallying point of their party. How far this will assist them it is at present difficult to tell ; but one thing they may rely upon with certainty,—that

the people, though for a time espousing their cause, will again desert them at the first clashing of interests.

“Among the Western hunters and warriors there are better materials for a future aristocracy than can be found in the Atlantic cities. They are, at least, owners of real estate, and possess the soil on which they play the lords. In short, the persons who are now called ‘the aristocracy of the Northern States’ must change their manners, habits, principles, and education, before they can expect to gain a hold on the sympathy of the people.”

“But why do you remain with a party with which you have so little sympathy?” demanded I.

“Because I do not wish to be called an ‘apostate.’ I am so far disgusted with politics, that I will not have anything to do with them hereafter. The great interests of democracy claim in every country, even in absolute monarchies, the utmost attention of the legislator. All wise statesmen, whether kings or senators, have been attached to its leading principles ; but men have ever been too corrupt to give it a systematic developement. This circumstance makes me sometimes doubt its success among

us; though I, for one, am no longer opposed to the experiment."

"The press!" shouted the company, —
"the press!" and the editors pledged it in a bumper.

CHAPTER VI.

Unitarian Preaching. — Doctor Channing. — Character of his Audience. — Religious Party on the Sabbath. — Discussion of Dr. Channing's Merits. — Moral Cant. — General Characteristic of New England Society. — Women the only Aristocracy.

“ Love, and meekness, lord,
Become a churchman better than ambition.”

King Henry VIII. Act v. Scene 2.

“ La Religione e la Filosofia comandare l'una e l'altra energico volere, e giudizio pacato, e senza queste unite condizioni non esservi nè giustizia, nè dignità, nè principii securi.”

SILVIO PELLICO.—“ *Le mie prigionie.*”

THIS being Sabbath, and the last day of my stay in Boston, I went to the “first Unitarian church” to hear Dr. Channing, a gentleman of wide-spread reputation in America, and of late considerably known also in England. He is considered the prophet of Unitarianism in the United States, and I am not disposed to derogate from his reputation. He has undoubtedly contributed much to the popularity of the sect in Boston, and to its spreading in several parts of the Union,

where a large portion of the population consists of New-Englanders.

I once heard a clever man assert, that the world stood in expectation of a great man who should unite the three principal creeds, Christianity, Judaism, and Islamism, into one, and thus bring unity and concord among the different believers in one God. Whether such a man would have to clothe his doctrines in pious mysticism, in order to affect the heart as well as the mind, and to embrace all the peculiarities of these creeds, he did not say; but, since I have heard Dr. Channing, I am inclined to think that he is the man, and that he intends to solve the grand problem by philosophical *analysis*. It is possible, namely, instead of inventing a form which shall contain each of these creeds as a co-ordinate part, to make use of the dissecting-knife in order to cut off all that is not perfectly homogeneous: the remaining trunks, with their “sublime moral,” would then so little differ from one another, that the one might be safely substituted for the other, and *vice versâ*. How much the world would gain by such a simplification, I leave political economists and female philosophers to judge, who perhaps are best able to appreciate the advantages and beauty of such a system.

The sermon I heard was one of the doctor's best. It was "on the character of Christ," and I must do him the justice to say that he handled his subject with great skill. It was a perfect epopee—almost equal to the *Henriade*, only that it was in prose. The effect on the audience was electric. Instead of the ladies fanning themselves, and the gentlemen sleeping as they are wont to do at this season of the year, they all looked "at the doctor," and at each other, as if doubting the reality of so extraordinary an effort. I expected at every moment a public manifestation of their feelings, but was disappointed; for hardly had he finished, and a psalm been sung by the choir, before his hearers—who, I was told, were composed of the "genteelest" and "most *fashionable* part of the community"—left church with that peculiar English propriety and undisturbed countenance, which would have led an European from the Continent to suppose they had never been affected.

It is usual in Boston to make sermons a peculiar branch of literature, and to discuss them in lieu of other literary matter at dinner or tea, especially on Sundays. This practice, by which many an European has undoubtedly been edified, I was to-day doomed to become a victim of, in

a very nice family. I took tea at a gentleman's house, who, though he had seen a good deal of the world, thought it nevertheless *prudent* to conform to the customs of society; especially as he had grown-up daughters, whose prospects in life might have suffered from an open confession of the liberality of his principles. Having arrived at the conviction that religion is absolutely necessary to the *moral and political* well-being of the community, and that it is a powerful means of repressing the vices and passions of the *multitude*, he espoused, on his return to America, that creed which most nearly approached his mode of thinking, and put the least restraint on his habits. His family were inclined towards orthodoxy; but, the father worshipping at an Unitarian church, the daughters followed his example, and listened to the eloquent discourses of Dr. Channing.

Scarcely had I entered the room, and, in the good New England fashion, bowed separately to all the ladies, and shaken each of the gentlemen present by the hand, before the eldest daughter—a beautiful dark-eyed girl, with black hair and ruby lips—addressed me in the most solemn manner in these terms:—

“Well, Mr. ***, whom did you hear to-day?”†

† This is the Sunday “How do you do?” of the Bostonians.

"I heard Dr. Channing," replied I.

"Were you not delighted?"

I somewhat hesitated for an answer.

"It was certainly a great effort," said the gentleman, observing my embarrassment.

"But is he not a charming preacher?—I mean, is not his *style* beautiful?" demanded the girl.

"It is *glorious, glorious, glorious!*" echoed the women.

"And the doctor is not only one of our greatest preachers, but also one of our first literary characters," resumed the young lady. "He has written an excellent sermon against General Jackson, and a most glorious article against Napoleon in the North American Review."

"Is he also a politician?" demanded I.

"Yes, sir, and a most *glorious* one; he wrote against the tariff, and of late also against slavery."

"Why did he not write sooner against it?"

"Because he waited for the proper time, just after the subject had been taken up in England."

"Are you an abolitionist, Miss * * *?"

"I was taught never to speak of it," said the girl, blushing. "It is a question in which

we dare not act, as we are told by our minister."

"For G—d's sake!" cried the old gentleman; "let us not have *bobolition*. Those blackguards are already stirring up the country in every direction, and will not be satisfied until they will have produced a separation of the Union. I think Dr. Channing had better turn his wits to something else."

"But what induced him to preach against General Jackson?" demanded I.

"Because General Jackson was very nigh involving the country in a war with France, and Dr. Channing is opposed to war, on account of its wickedness. It completely obscures 'moral grandeur,' and sets a high premium on the lower qualities of the mind, such as courage, patriotism, and the like. He is in general opposed to 'military greatness,' and is just as severe on Napoleon, Nelson, Wellington, and Jackson, as Pope was upon women; only he is not quite so satirical," observed the old gentleman. "He thinks those men will have 'a very low standing' in the other world. Isn't it so, my child?"

"Precisely so, father; Dr. Channing always speaks of Napoleon as of 'the miscalled great man.'"

“Then the French were right in calling him *le PETIT caporal*.”

“Why, the doctor calls Napoleon only a *third-rate man*!”

“Then, I assure you, he has been sinking the bathos in a professional manner. Such a speech might have been *piquant* some twenty-five or thirty years ago at a nobleman's table; but no one can venture on it now without betraying the most profound ignorance of history, and the most ridiculous conceit at the same time. None but great men do great things; the saying and writing them is left to inferior minds, and often to mere scribblers. Napoleon tamed the revolution, he changed its corrosive nature; which alone ought to have entitled him to the respect of the Tories.”

“It is the misfortune of our people,” continued the old gentleman, “that they cram everything under the head of morality. Morality is the cant and crack word of the place. If you go to our fashionable churches, you will hear the fashionable clergyman preach ‘morality;’ if you visit a private gentleman's house, he is sure to entertain you with ‘morality;’ if you attend a public meeting, the ‘moral’ speaker will address his ‘moral’ fellow-citizens on the subject of

‘public morals;’ if you listen to the partisan harangues of our professional politicians, they will conjure the people ‘in the name of morality’ to outvote the profligate antagonist faction, &c. Morality seems to be the great lever of society; the difficulty only consists in finding its fulcrum.”

“I believe Dr. Channing is very popular in England,” observed one of the visitors.

“Among the Unitarians at least,” replied the master of the house; “but the assertion of some of his friends here, that he is the best English writer now living, is, I can assure you, wholly gratuitous. We are apt to overdo things on this side of the Atlantic, and are either too lavishing in our praise or too severe in our censure. We always deal in superlatives, even in common conversation; which is the surest sign of our imagination being void of images. Everything with us is ‘most beautiful,’ ‘most sublime,’ ‘most glorious,’ from a turnip up to our ministers, lawyers, and statesmen; so that, on occasions when we are really moved, we have no other terms to express our feelings than those whose signification is already worn out by common use.

“As regards Dr. Channing’s merits as an

author, no one can deny, I believe, that he is a correct and tasteful writer, though by no means a powerful one. There is throughout his productions a visible want of originality and strength, which a skilful rhetoric and a nice selection of terms are incapable of concealing even from ordinary readers. His ideas are less striking than the garb in which they are dressed, and remind one constantly of some pretty little miniature painting, in which the artist is more successful in the drapery than in the face. In addition to this, he is, like all New-Englanders, prone to argument, and in the course of it but too frequently betrays the want of logic and sound scholarship.

“This is most apparent in his little pamphlet on Slavery, and the annexation of Texas. He there ventured on a subject in which the popular feeling was already in his favour, and yet did not set forth a single new idea capable of adding strength to his cause. He merely reiterated, and dressed in new garbs, the general argument against slavery, used by European writers nearly a hundred years ago; and, in so doing, but followed the example of hundreds of his countrymen, who did the same thing at a time when it was dangerous to advance such doctrines in America. I

naturally expected to see the subject treated, not in the English manner, but applied to the condition of the Southern States. I thought he would allude to the forlorn condition of the *free* negroes at the North, and propose some means of elevating their character, in order gradually to prepare them for a rational state of freedom. I thought he would reproach his own fellow-citizens for refusing negro children to be educated at our public schools, for excluding them from our churches, our theatres, our public houses, our stage-coaches, and even our burying-grounds! And yet it is evident that, as long as the feelings of our Northern population do not change with regard to the negroes, emancipation can do them no good; for, while it gives them liberty, it prevents them from becoming respectable,—it takes away the master's whip in order to transfer the slave to the pillory and the gallows.

“I expected Dr. Channing to propose a scheme for gradually emancipating the negroes, without absolutely ruining the planters; but, instead of all this, he contented himself with declaiming against slavery in the abstract, and in appealing to the *political* prejudices of the Northern people.”

“But,” objected one of the gentlemen, “Dr.

Channing, in his pamphlet on Slavery, and in his 'Letter to Henry Clay, on the annexation of Texas,' says that he is aware that these publications will make him unpopular with a large portion of his readers; but that he is prepared to meet their disapprobation, rather than omit to do his duty."

"Oh! that's nothing," rejoined the master of the house, "but a display of courage in times of peace. Let him preach the same doctrines to the Southerners, or, as I said before, allude to the forlorn condition of the free negroes amongst ourselves, and I will believe in his moral fortitude. Many a clergyman in the United States has exposed himself to being mobbed, and some *were* mobbed, for daring to preach what Dr. Channing published with the greatest possible security in Boston; and yet those men earned no reputation for their martyrdom."

"Neither did these men employ the proper means for abolishing slavery; they preached revolt."

"And Dr. Channing," resumed the old gentleman, "the doctrine of political equality. He pressed the subject of slavery on his Northern brethren, not with the calm, impressive voice

of an apostle of Christianity,* but with the malice of a political demagogue, jealous of the mental superiority of the South. Riches he neither condemns nor despises; but he is inexorable on the subject of leisure, which enables the Southern planters to be gentlemen and professional politicians. Here" (pointing to a little pamphlet lying on the table) "is the best proof of his sincerity and courage. See what he says of the South and North in his Letter to Henry Clay. If the company will allow me, I will read the passage. It is worth perusing, as it contains an illustration of the character of our leading people.

" 'I now proceed,' says Dr. Channing, 'to another important argument against the annexation of Texas to our country,—the argument drawn from the bearings of the measure on our national Union. Next to liberty, union is our great political interest; and this cannot but be loosened—it may be dissolved—by the proposed extension of our territory. I will not say that *every* extension must be pernicious; that our government cannot hold together even our present confederacy; that the central heart (?) cannot send its influences to the remote states which are to spring

* In his Letter to Henry Clay he avers that he has prepared himself for his task by "self-purification;" but in what manner he does not mention.

up within our present borders. Old theories must be cautiously applied to this country. If the federal government will abstain from *minute* legislation, and rigidly confine itself within constitutional bounds, it may be a bond of union to more extensive communities than were ever comprehended under one sway.'

"Capital logic, this!" exclaimed one of the visitors. "Do not pretend to rule, and you will sway over extensive communities. And what does he mean by *minute* legislation? What do the Southerners claim but non-interference with their internal regulations? and yet, while Dr. Channing preaches the same doctrine, he stirs up a question which, sooner or later, must interfere with the sovereignty of the States."

"This is not all," replied the old gentleman: "he contradicts himself every third or fourth line, preaching union on one hand, and the dissolution of it on the other. Let me read to you another passage.

" 'Undoubtedly there is peril in extending ourselves; and yet the chief benefit of the Union, which is the preservation of peaceful relations among neighbouring states, is so vast that some risk should be taken to secure it in the greatest possible degree. The objection to the annexation of Texas, drawn from the unwieldiness it would give to the country, though very serious, is not decisive. A far more serious ob-

jection is, that it should be annexed to us for the avowed purpose of multiplying slave-holding States, and thus giving POLITICAL POWER. *This* cannot, ought not to be borne. It will *justify*, it will at length DEMAND a separation of the States.’”

“Did I not always tell you,” interrupted the same visitor, “that the doctrine of nullification originated in Massachusetts? This is but a repetition of sentiments expressed here more than twenty years ago. But we change opinions according to circumstances.”

“Hear on!” cried the master of the house “You interrupted me in the best part of Channing’s letter.

“‘We maintain,’ he says, ‘that this policy is altogether without reason on the part of the South. The South has exerted, and cannot help exerting, a disproportionate share of influence on the confederacy. The slave-holding States have already advantages of co-operation, and for swaying the country, which the others do not possess. *The free States have no common interest like slavery to hold them together.* They differ in character, feelings, and pursuits. They agree but on one point, and that a negative one,—the absence of slavery; and this distinction, as is well known, makes no lively impression on the consciousness, and in no degree counteracts the influences which divide them from one another. To this may be added the well-known fact, that in the free States the subject of

politics is of secondary importance, whilst in the South it is paramount. In the North, every man must toil for subsistence; and, amidst the feverish competitions and anxieties of the eager and universal pursuit of gain, political power is sought with little comparative avidity. *In some districts it is hard to find fit representatives for Congress*, so backward are *superior men* to forego the emoluments of their vocation,—the prospect of independence,—for the uncertainties of public life.’”

“Under such circumstances,” interrupted I, “and with such an exalted patriotism on the part of your *superior men* in the North, the American people ought to be glad to find Southern legislators in Congress; else their senate and house of representatives would contain nothing but men of straw.”

“It is precisely that mental aristocracy of the South which our people dislike the most,” responded the old gentleman. “They cannot pardon elegant manners and superior education. But hear what parallel Dr. Channing draws between the South and North.

“‘What contrast does the South form with the divided and slumbering North! There, one strong broad distinction exists, of which all the members of the community have a perfect consciousness; there a peculiar element is found, which spreads its influence

through the mass, and impresses itself on the whole constitution of society. Nothing decides the character of a people more than the form and determination of labour. Hence we find a unity in the South unknown in the North. In the South, too, the proprietors, released from the necessity of labour, and having little of the machinery of association to engage their attention, devote themselves to politics with a concentration of zeal which a Northerner can only comprehend by being on the spot. *Hence the South has professional politicians*, a character hardly known in the free States.'

"You hear," cried the reader, "*our* politicians are mere *dilettanti*."

"‘The result is plain,’ continues Dr. Channing. ‘The South has generally ruled the country. It must always have an undue power. United, as the North cannot be, it can always link to itself some discontented portion in the North, which it can liberally reward by the patronage which the possession of the government confers.’"

"This, gentlemen," exclaimed the master of the house, "is the manner in which the doctor preaches against slavery! He shows the whole value of it to the South, and then calls upon the South to renounce it, in order to put itself on a level with the North. An *advocate* of slavery could not have selected a better argument for

pressing the continuance of the institution on the Southern planters, and yet he expects them to become convinced of its wickedness. He has, indeed, a most peculiar way of exhorting sinners ; he shows them all the nice things they may get by offending against the law, and then says, "All these you shall *not* have by following me."

"And what does all his argument come to," observed one of the visitors, "but this?—Our moneyed men in the North revere nothing more than money ; but, because each of us is determined to make money, we are divided into as many different castes as there are ways and means of making money. We, Northerners, have no rallying point ; because every one makes money for himself, and not for his neighbour. This, however, is not enough to give us political strength ; and for this reason the Southerners, who by their slaves are placed above the necessity of making money, rule over us by superior talent and education. This is a state of things not to be endured ; and, since we cannot become clever ourselves, we must at least prevent others from becoming so. With us, politics come after money ; in the South, they take the lead in all human pursuits. If, therefore, we want to get the upper hand with those Southerners, we must

abolish slavery, or, in other words, force the planters to make money for themselves; then we shall see who can make money faster, the South or the North. In the North all work for money; and, as politics with us are no very lucrative pursuit, our *superior* (rich?) men will have nothing to do with them. They prefer the prospect of money to that of political distinction, and the actual possession of it to everything else in the world."

"Capital!" cried the old gentleman; "that's the point Dr. Channing is going to make. We would like to become like the Southerners, if we could do so without pecuniary sacrifice; but, as this is entirely out of the question, we must reduce those who are above us to our own level. In this manner we shall promote equality and justice, and, in addition, obtain credit with the world for philanthropy and true Christian charity."

"You may say what you please against the doctor," said the eldest girl, visibly displeased by the turn the conversation had taken. "I shall always believe him *a charming preacher*."

"I am myself very fond of his sermons," added the old lady; "only I prefer reading them at home to hearing them at church."

“And I,” observed an elderly gentleman, “do not like his explanation of the Scriptures by their general scope, and the disbelief of their being written by Divine inspiration; though I heard his colleague assert, that, *rather than disbelieve THE WHOLE, he would take every part of them FOR GOSPEL.*”

*

*

*

*

And now I must bid good-b'ye to Boston and its remarkable inhabitants, who, I am afraid, have already occupied my attention more than is agreeable to my readers, and, perhaps, to the Bostonians themselves. “Common sense” is certainly the staple commodity of *New England*; but I cannot say I have always found it in the *metropolis*. The Bostonians are too much flattered by their own public men and the press, not to be occasionally benefited by the remarks of “a foreigner.” They all call themselves an enthusiastic people, — comparing themselves to the Athenians; but, during my whole stay in the United States, I have not known one of them moved by the tender passion, which, strange to say, never attacks an educated Bostonian *mal à propos*.

The gentlemen of that city never do anything out of season. Whenever one of them falls in

love, you may be sure he is quite ready to get married, and that the object of his affection is a legitimate one. He does not throw away his sentiment on some unattainable object, for he husbands his feelings as he does his property. No man remembers better than he the words of Bacon: "When it (love) entereth men's minds, it troubleth men's *business*;" and, the latter constituting by far the most important object of his life, it is comparatively a rare case to see him *look out for a wife* "before he sees his way clear ahead." In this manner he avoids a great deal of romance and vice; but all this prudence and calculation, this impossibility of being betrayed into some rash inconsiderate act, lend to his character a degree of hardness and severity, which, though it may admirably qualify him for public life, renders him, nevertheless, the most unamiable creature in society.

I have heard it said that the New-Englanders in general have a quicker perception, and are shrewder, than Europeans or the rest of the Americans. The Bostonians pride themselves on being "sharper" than the Jews, and on preventing them from making a living in their city; but I cannot say that this agrees with my experience. As regards quickness of perception,

they are certainly inferior to the Italians, and in part even to the French ; but they make up for it by their greater calmness, which renders them less liable to error. They have not, as a certain English writer believes, two heads ; their clearness of judgment arises only from the absence of emotions. Where men have but *one* aim, and that a definite and finite one, they are seldom deterred from it ; so that the vulgar, who merely judge by the success, often ascribe to them great mental powers : but there is a kind of genius which, from its very elevation, and its necessary incommensurability with the common mind, is doomed to unceasing strife ; and with this the New-Englanders have in general but little sympathy.

The great difficulty which Europeans, and even Jews, find in acquiring property in New England, is not so much owing to the superior business-talent or cunning of the New-Englanders, as to the practice of “every man’s doing every man’s business ;” which reduces the price of all kinds of labour by excessive competition, and leaves no room for interlopers of any description. No species of industry is deemed vulgar or degrading ; and, while a European or a Southerner is obliged to do an hundred things

honoris causâ, the New-Englander undertakes nothing without a prospect of advantage or reward.

Another deficiency in the composition of the New-Englander is the absence of humour. I have, indeed, been shown a number of persons who were said to possess a great deal of what is called "dry wit;" but which, after all, was but an odd way of expressing common-place ideas. Their conversation, generally, wants seasoning,—the spice of imagination and taste. In sarcasm they succeed better; simply because they have more judgment than fancy, and understand dissection better than composition. I shall never forget the definition which a Southern gentleman, a member of Congress, gave of the satirical powers of a distinguished politician of the North. "He has no imagination," said he, "no humour, no keenness of wit; but his sarcasm resembles a very cold razor, which takes off the skin without requiring an edge."

These are some of the dark points in the character of the New-Englander. His bright ones are exhibited in his relation to the community as a citizen. Few people have so great a respect for the law, and are so well able to govern themselves. In no other country are the

labouring classes so well instructed, so orderly, and, I may add, so respectable,—in the *European* sense of the word,—as in New England. Though their State politics have generally been inclined towards Whig, and even Toryism, they are nevertheless the most thorough Radicals in principle, and, perhaps, the only people capable of enjoying so large a portion of liberty without abusing it. In addition to this they are sober, industrious, and, with the exception of a few straggling pedlars, from whom it would be absurd to draw a general conclusion, just and honourable in their dealings. In short, nature has done everything to make them calm sober republicans; but reserved every agreeable and amiable quality exclusively for the *women*. Not only are “the ladies” better educated than “the gentlemen;” but also, owing to their entire separation from trade and traffic, more imaginative, high-minded, and patriotic. If the Bostonians, and the New-Englanders in general, have been remarkable for deeds of public and national charity, I am inclined to believe it was principally owing to

. . . . “th’ balm that draps on wounds of woe
Frae woman’s pitying e’e.”

The women, in fact, are the real *aristocracy* of New England; and I shall go to live in Boston when Miss Martineau's plan is realized, and the women emancipated from thralldom.

CHAPTER VII.

The Nobleman's Journal becomes more and more Aristocratic. — Wistar Parties in Philadelphia. — Literary Gentlemen in Philadelphia. — The Girard College. — Character of the late Stephen Girard. — The Quakers. — Their Aristocratic Sentiments. — Quaker Dress. — Philadelphia Ladies. — Good Living in Philadelphia. — The Mansion-house in Third-street. — Apostrophe to the Fashionable Young Men and to the Men of Family.

“Still stranger much, that when at last mankind
 Had reach'd the sinewy firmness of their youth,
 And could discriminate and argue well
 On subjects more mysterious, they were yet
 Babes in the cause of freedom, and should fear
 And quake before the gods themselves had made ;
 But above measure strange that neither proof
 Of sad experience, nor example set
 By some, whose patriot virtue had prevail'd,
 Can even now, when they are grown mature
 In wisdom, and with philosophic deeds
 Familiar, serve t' emancipate the rest !”

COWPER'S *Task*, Canto v.

THE journal of my friend I found was too long for publication. Besides, I could discover his aristocratic propensities to grow stronger and stronger in exact proportion to his intercourse

with the higher classes ; so that I was obliged to omit his notes on the society of Philadelphia and Baltimore, in order to find room for his observations on Washington. Two circumstances, however, I must not suffer to pass unnoticed ; his admiration of the Quakers, and his dislike of the Wistar parties,—a sort of half literary, half fashionable, weekly convention of gentlemen, at which a tolerable supper is added to a great deal of indifferent conversation on ordinary topics.

“ There is,” says my friend, in one of his notes, “ a much greater number of literary and scientific gentlemen in Philadelphia than can be found in any other city of the United States ; but they are, as yet, far from forming ‘ a republic of letters.’ As long as literary and scientific men without fortune are merely tolerated by their wealthy but less clever colleagues ; as long as science and literature in the United States are judged, not by their high intrinsic value, but by the advantages which may result from them in the common transactions of life ; as long as arts and sciences remain without influential patrons or public consideration, it is in vain to attempt their promotion by pampering poets and painters with a weekly supper. These ‘ literary *réunions*,’

as they are called in Philadelphia, are not calculated to put a man of letters at his ease, or to elicit new thoughts by familiar conversation. On the contrary, they are stiff, unsociable, full of that *gênante étiquette* which prevails in all the higher American coteries to the exclusion of mirth and familiarity. The Athenæum and Garrick clubs in London contain daily a thousand times better opportunities of improvement to young literary men, than the Wistar parties of Philadelphia in the course of a century. There are, in fact, no establishments similar to those in the United States; though there are *very respectable* gambling clubs in New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore, and even in the godly city of Boston."

"The newly established Girard College," observes my friend in another note, "will not prove so great a blessing to the Philadelphians as is generally imagined. With the munificent donation of its founder, and the truly royal splendour of its execution, it will, I am afraid, become after all little more than an ordinary school of arts and trades. The whole system of education in the United States, and the tone of society, must materially change, before an institution like the Polytechnic School of France can possibly succeed in forming scholars in the higher depart-

ments of science. The peculiar foundation and organization of Girard College does not seem to me to be much calculated to improve the system of hand-to-mouth learning produced by the material tendency, and the desire of pecuniary gain and profit, which form the index to the character of the greater part of professional men in America. The founder himself, though in many respects a public-spirited, and in his own way a clever man, had but a vulgar appreciation of genius, and a very high respect for money. This is undoubtedly the reason why he chose none but wealthy men for trustees of the college which was to bear his name, though it is more than probable some literary men might have been found in the United States, who, without being able to give *bonds*, would have proved of some advantage in establishing and organizing a college.

“All I have heard of that vain old Frenchman confirms me in the opinion that, even in his acts of generosity, he was but a vulgar plebeian ; never consulting the feelings of those he wished to benefit, but first wounding with a rude hand their inmost soul, in order afterwards to apply the healing plaster in the shape of a bank-note. Thus, he would lecture one of his

most faithful servants engaged to be married, on the vexations and follies of matrimony ; drawing in a brutal manner the veil from nature's holiest mysteries, and refusing to give him aid and protection, until, perceiving that his victim, dreading the consequences of his temper, remained, like some obedient cur, silent at the abuses of his master, he signed a bank-check in his favour to the amount, I believe, of some thousand pounds. I have heard other anecdotes about him of a similar nature, from which I could not help drawing the conclusion that it was his peculiar delight to make his friends and clients forswear every other god and goddess before he introduced them to the temple of Mammon ;—or did the cunning Gaul do so from a knowledge of the society in which he wished to gain an ascendancy ? What reason, after all, had the Philadelphians to be proud of such a man ? And what difference is there between an American banker leaving several millions of dollars to a rich and populous city, in order that his name may be perpetuated by the building of a school ; and an honest English boot-black, who leaves an hundred thousand pounds for the establishment of an hospital ? * — I can see none ; unless it be that the act of the

* Mr. Day, of the firm of Day and Martin.

former proceeded from vanity, while that of the latter took its origin in charity and true Christian piety.

“ The most interesting part of Philadelphia society are the Quakers ; as a body the most singular, as individuals the most respectable, Christians in the United States. I do not here speak of their religious tenets, which are sufficiently known to the world ; but of the fact of their being throughout a moral people, by mutual support almost universally in easy circumstances, and from their habits of industry and frugality seldom led into temptation. No other Christian society is held together by such strong ties of affection and brotherhood ; no other set of men bear in their manners, habits, dress, and character so strongly the imprints of their faith. They carry their religion—a thing unknown in these times of moral and political advancement—into every act of their private and public lives ; and, though they sometimes obtrude it in a manner not the most pleasant or refined on the notice of strangers, show at least on all occasions that Christianity with them is a living principle, not an abstract doctrine to be remembered only on the Sabbath.

“ I like aristocracy in every shape, whenever it

has a solid foundation; but I despise aristocratic pretensions in a vulgar rich man. The aristocracy of the Quakers consists not so much in wealth as in family, and this circumstance has given to the society of Philadelphia a tone decidedly superior to that of New York. Though much more exclusive and less hospitable than the New-Yorkers, the Philadelphians are more agreeable and elegant in their manners. They have more of the *à-plomb* of gentlemen. There is less motion and more dignity in their carriage; and you can see, from an hundred little circumstances, that the higher classes have the advantage of a generation over the ordinary run of aristocrats in the United States.

“The Quakers, who are still among those who directly or indirectly influence the fashions of society, have introduced a patrician simplicity in dress, manners, and habits, which forms a singular contrast with the gaudy ostentatious display of wealth with which one is occasionally struck in New York. The Philadelphia ladies dress with more taste than any others in the Union; they walk, dance, sing, and talk better than those of the Northern cities; and their manners in general are more finished. They do not study Latin and Greek, like some of the New England belles;

but they prattle French and Spanish, and sometimes Italian, with tolerable facility. They cultivate the *agréments* of society; while a great portion of the Northern women puzzle their heads, and those of their admirers, with philosophy and the classics. Yet it is but justice to say, that the women of New England, even those of the highest classes, remain unsurpassed as wives and mothers, and set, in this respect, the example to all other females in the United States.

“ In point of shape, the ladies of Philadelphia are believed to be unrivalled; their necks, shoulders, and waists being admirably wrought, and their hands and feet of the most aristocratic littleness. Their complexions are not so clear and fresh as those of the women of New England; but the expression of their countenances is more *distinguée*, inclining somewhat towards the Spanish. I was also told that they had a taste for the romantic; several ‘droll’ engagements taking place annually, and a small number of run-away matches furnishing from time to time sufficient matter for the *chronique scandaleuse* of the town. Things of this kind are of rare occurrence in the North; though, as I observed during my stay in Boston, there is no lack of imagination on the

part of the *women*. But where should a young Bostonian find time to run away with a lady? What business or matter-of-fact man is sufficiently amiable for a woman to risk her reputation on his account?

“ The Quaker ladies, in general, are renowned for their beauty. They dress plainly, but in the richest materials; showing that their aristocracy consists in substance, not in forms. The colour of their dresses, which is usually of a light grey, is not ill suited to a fair complexion; but the cut is too Old-English not to form a glaring contrast with the Paris fashions weekly imported into the United States. At the time of William Penn, the Quaker dress was not distinguished from the fashions of the day by all that was inelegant, odd, contrary to the prevailing taste; and on that account did not obtrude itself on every one’s notice. But at present the case is reversed; the very simplicity of the apparel becomes an arrogant distinction, or may at least be considered as such by those who do not look upon it as a part of their religious creed. Every man or woman owes something to society, so that a total disregard of its established rules and customs is usually considered as proceeding either from extreme vulgarity, or a degree of elevation which need

not descend to the level of others : a wise person avoids the dilemma.

“ For this reason, and perhaps also because the French fashions of the day are far more becoming to a pretty face, and exhibit *taille, tournure*, &c. to much greater advantage, a portion of ‘ the Society of Friends ’ have of late relaxed from their original severity, and adopted certain unobjectionable parts of Parisian millinery. The selection they made shows their tact and sense of propriety ; and it is now a common saying with travelled men, that, in order to see a well-dressed lady, one must either see a Parisian woman of the higher classes, or a ‘ *gay Quakeress* of Philadelphia.’ The gentlemen, too, begin to trim their hats, and allow the fashionable scissors to be applied to their coats, without dreading the immediate downfall of Christianity. They are also said to have grown more attentive to ladies ; having, at last arrived at the conviction that the hearts of women are more easily attached by the silken thread of trifling cares and attentions, than by the chain-cable of constant toil and sacrifice.

“ A number of Quakers of Philadelphia occupy themselves exclusively with science and literature ; few of them are not members of some charitable

or other association for the benefit of mankind. Yet they have, from the commencement of the revolutionary war, been denounced as *Tories*: partly because they did not take an active part in the struggle for independence; and partly because, as politicians, they have always been in favour of a federal government. If it be true that family, education, and even property, are, from the principle of self-preservation, inclined towards a strong protective government, the Quakers as a body must naturally be advocates of Conservatism; but in a country like America, where political principles and parties are constantly changing, where the power of the government and the opposition are so nearly balanced, and where the clashing interests of society sometimes completely paralyze the course of politics adopted by the Congress of the nation, I can see no evil come from a small part of the community being attached to existing forms, or united, if this were possible, for the purpose of resisting the rapidity of public events.

“ The American government, as I have often said, requires, more than any other, a strong opposition. The aristocratic and democratic principles mutually excite and increase one another, like positive and negative electricity in the metal-

lic plates of a galvanic chain; only, that from time to time they require *cleaning*. Each principle without the presence of the other would soon degenerate; and it is, in this situation of public affairs, perhaps a fortunate circumstance that there should exist at least *one* class of society capable of representing with some sort of dignity the aristocratic element of State.

“The time, after all, must come when the United States will have their history; when the present will be linked to the past; when the names of American statesmen and patriots will go for something in the estimation of the public. Then the influence of family will and must be felt by the people as the historical representative of their political existence. This period is now delayed by the apparent opposition between the higher and lower classes; but it will arrive as soon as the real *élite* of society will *join* the lower orders against the tyranny of mediocrity—in the shape of the government of the rich *bourgeoisie*.

“The society of Philadelphia is, on the whole, better than that of Boston or New York. There is less vulgar aristocracy than in other Northern cities. Not that I mean to say that there are not people to be found in Boston and New York

that could rival the Philadelphians in point of ‘gentility;’ but in the good ‘city of brotherly love’ there is, probably owing to a seasonable admixture of a large number of European, and especially French families, * a higher tone, greater elegance, and, in every respect, more *agrémens*. The New-Englanders are an arguing people, and annoy you, even in society, with mathematical and political demonstrations. The Philadelphians have more taste, and *have the best cooks in the United States*.

“ There is nothing more aristocratic than the keeping of an excellent cook ; nothing so vulgar as not to care what one is eating or drinking. ‘ *Dis-moi ce que tu manges, et je te dirai qui tu es,*’ said the celebrated author of ‘ *La Physiologie du Goût ;*’ and, certes, no Philadelphian will in this respect be found wanting in the scale. There is a nice little house in Third-street, kept by a man, or, as I should say, ‘ a gentleman,’ who spent upwards of an hundred thousand dollars in Europe in learning how to eat and drink, and who is now teaching the same science to a select circle of his countrymen ; charging them for his trouble a little less than some of the quack professors of the culinary art in New York and Boston, who think a dinner excellent when it consists of

joints, and show their barbarism by putting ice in their claret.

“ Mr. H—d, of the Mansion-house in Philadelphia, has been long enough in Europe to know the difference between gravy and melted butter ; and if every American that goes to Europe to improve himself would *only learn as much*, there would be no harm, and much substantial benefit, arising from it to the country. I have, at his house, eaten fricassees that would have done credit to old Véry ;—his son inherited the money, not the taste of his father ;—and sauces with which, as Prince Puckler Muskau has it, ‘ a man could have eaten his own grandfather !’ In short, one is more comfortable at the neat little house in Third-street, than anywhere else in the United States. An Englishman himself could live there without missing any of the luxuries of his own country, if the bar-keeper were not a stupid old negro, and Mr. H—d, jun. more of a gentleman than a landlord.

“ A word in parting to you,” says my German traveller, apostrophising the fashionable young men of Philadelphia ; “ you are much mistaken if you take the terms ‘ idler,’ and ‘ gentleman,’ for synonymous. There is a vast difference between a gentleman of leisure, and a vagrant that walks

up and down Chestnut-street, and stares women out of countenance. You seem to think that a certain bold unabashed look marks the gentleman of *ton*,—the fashionable rake, whose position in society enables him to disregard the prejudices of the multitude. You pamper your fancy in the *salons*, in order afterwards to feed upon a common pasture. This is but a miserable way of imitating the refined *roué* of Europe. If you cannot affect sentiment, conceal at least your passion, or curb your inordinate fancy. There is nothing so vulgar as imagination without taste.—And you men of family, without fashion! study aristocracy in the classics, rather than in the newspaper polemics of the day; or, if this should prove too tedious, read the history of the Italian republics. There was a time in Florence when every nobleman was obliged to have a trade, and yet Florence produced the *Medici*; why should you be ashamed to imitate so high an example? or are you afraid lest all your tradespeople should wish to become noblemen?”*

* Trade and traffic are less popular in Philadelphia than in other parts of the Union; the young men delighting in being called “gentlemen of leisure.”

ARISTOCRACY IN AMERICA.

PART III.

CONTAINING A TRIP TO WASHINGTON, AND A SHORT
STAY IN THE METROPOLIS.

CHAPTER I.

Journey to Baltimore. — Arrival in the City. — Barnum's Hotel. — The Washington Letter-writer. — His Views of Politics. — Arrival in Washington. — Street Manners of the People. — Hotels and Boarding-houses. — High Life in the Metropolis. — The Epicure House.

“ Quando si parte il giuoco della zara
 Colui che perde si riman dolente
 Ripetendo le volte e tristo impara ;
 Con l' altro se ne va tutta la gente.”

DANTE.

ONE morning, early in the month of March, I left Philadelphia in a steamer for Baltimore. It was a frosty cold day, and we were obliged to have a fire in the cabin ; round which the gentlemen—the ladies occupying, as usual, a separate, more elegantly furnished room,—formed at first a small, but, in proportion as the company increased, a larger circle. The manners of the people had already a touch of the South in them : scarcely would a gentleman approach the stove before those who were already seated made room for him ; an attention which, trifling as it was, marked a certain

consideration for the feelings of others, which it is always gratifying to notice wherever we are. The captains of the boats from Philadelphia to Frenchtown, and from Newcastle to Baltimore,—the distance from Frenchtown to Newcastle is made on a railroad,—were noted for their civility to the passengers; and, on the whole, I do not remember having travelled more at my ease in any part of the United States.

We arrived in Baltimore early in the afternoon of the same day; and the greater part of the company putting up at Barnum's hotel, I concluded to go thither also. On entering the spacious bar-room I at once asked for a separate room, and ordered my luggage to be taken up to it; but was told "that I must not be in a hurry," and that no room could be given away to any gentleman without the bar-keeper having made his "calculation." I then perceived that the gentlemen, one after the other, stepped up to him, telling him their names; which he put down on a slate, together with the number of rooms they asked for, precisely in the same manner as the burgomaster of some small town in Germany would set down the names of the officers of a regiment which is to be quartered upon it. It finally became my turn to speak.

“What’s your name, sir?” demanded the bar-keeper.

“Mr. * * *,” said I, taking care to omit the “De.”

“Are you alone, sir?”

“Yes; but that is the reason I want a room by myself.”

“All single rooms are engaged long ago. I shall have to put you in a room with one or two other gentlemen.”

“Then I shall not stay here.”

“You may do as you please; but I cannot accommodate you better. We have to turn away people every day, and we *must* serve our old customers.”

“You had better stop here,” whispered one of the gentlemen in my ear; “you will be satisfied with the house in every other respect, and I am quite sure you will not be able to do better in Baltimore.”

“But, sir,” said I to the bar-keeper, “cannot you manage to put me into a room with only one other person?”

“I will see what I can do for you, but I cannot promise; I must first make my *calculation*.”

“And you will of course put me together with a *gentleman*?”

“Nobody stops here but gentlemen; you need not have any scruples about *that*,” replied the bar-keeper rather indignantly.

I thought it best to be silent if I wanted to sleep that night at all, and thus quietly awaited my sentence. At last the bar-keeper had completed the distribution of the rooms; and began to call out the names of the gentlemen, telling each the number of the room he was to occupy. When he called out my name he smiled; and turning to me with a sarcastic expression, “We have to put you in a room with one gentleman,” said he; “but, should you stay longer, we can to-morrow give you a room by yourself.” I bowed in token of acknowledgment, and betook myself at once to the quarters assigned to me.

“Also going to Washington?” demanded my chum as I entered the room.

“Yes, sir; are you going?”

“I am *obliged* to go,” replied he (with an air of importance); “I am always there during the session of Congress.”

“Perhaps I have the honour of addressing a senator?”

“No, not exactly.”

“Or a representative?”

“Nor that either.”

“Then you must have some business there?”

“Certainly, sir; I am a correspondent of the New York * * *.”

“Oh! you write the letters from Washington for that paper?”

“Precisely so; and it is a more difficult task to write a good letter than to make a bad speech.”

“No doubt of that, sir; you may often be employed in making the best of a bad argument.”

“What do you mean, sir?”

“I mean, by improving what has been said by a senator or representative.”

“Not only that, but it is *we* that give the cue to every argument. Our representatives take up a question as they find it stated in the papers.”

“And it is you that govern the country?”

“It’s the press, sir, and nothing but the press, which governs a free people.”

“But is not the press liable to error?”

“All human institutions are; but *we* have such abundant means of correcting and preventing it, that it is almost impossible for us to be in the wrong. In the first place, *our* press has the money by which (drawing himself up to his full height) it can secure the best talents; and,

secondly, our people are too 'cool' to be easily wrought into a passion. We are a 'calculating' people."

"But your papers are full of personal abuse. Do you think *that* an advantage?"

"Not exactly; but it is unquestionably a great help — a seasoning of dull editorials. Our people have so much ordinary conversation in the course of the day, that, if it were not for the slander contained in our newspapers, they would not be amused at all. *Papers*, sir, are 'the eating, drink, and fuel' of the Americans; and on that account they can never be too hot for them."

"But very high seasoning marks a bad taste; I should think the best papers on what is called 'the aristocratic side' would scorn personal abuse."

"Quite the reverse, sir, I assure you. It's the only means of attracting notoriety, and of pleasing our first people. Besides, it would be useless to play the part of a gentleman in *that* respect, when all the rest are blackguards. We want strength, sir! strength! and nothing but strength! — none of your 'milk and molasses' productions, of which a man can make neither head nor tail. If we give a man a beating, we do not want him

to get up again ; ‘we go the whole hog.’ When we attack a man, we assail at once his moral, political, religious, and domestic relations. Every little helps, you know. ‘Give a dog a bad name, and hang him !’ says the proverb, and it is just so with our politicians.”

By this time I began to be afraid of the man, lest, if he should not “steal my purse,” he might publish me in the papers. He looked, indeed, like a desperate fellow ; though his self-sufficiency was quite amusing, and the smacking of his lips and the stroking of his chin, with which he accompanied every one of his sayings, were sufficiently ludicrous to destroy the effect of the ferocious manner in which he paced the room. I therefore made no farther reply, but began to dress for supper. This untimely cessation of conversation seemed to annoy him, as it probably prevented him from showing off, and impressing me with a proper respect for his station. He therefore drew a parcel of papers from his pocket, and throwing them violently on the table—

“Here,” exclaimed he, “is the last news. I dare say you know it already. We have triumphed in every part of the country. Our State is carried ‘high and dry.’”

“I do not care much about politics,” replied I.

“ You don’t ? ” said he. “ Why, then, do you stay in the country ? ”

“ Cannot you imagine a man to have any other business but politics ? ”

“ Oh, certainly, sir ! a man may be a merchant, a doctor, or a tradesman ; but, I mean, how do you *amuse* yourself ? I for my part should go mad if I had not politics to divert myself.” (With pride,) “ I *need* not be a politician, thank God ! I have money enough without it ; but I *love* politics on account of the pleasure they give me. I glory in them ! There is such fun in being on the side that beats. One hundred and fifty guns, sir, are to be fired from Albany to New York, and from New York back again to Albany, in honour of our last victory. Where is the pleasure to be compared to that, sir ? To carry a whole State ‘smack, smooth, and no mistake !’ ”

“ But it must be very annoying to be beaten.”

“ That never occurs to me, sir. I never stay long with the beaten party. If you study our politics, you will always find that our most ‘talented men’ desert a party just before it is going to break up. We always like to be on the conquering side. That’s the way to ‘get along’ in this country, sir, if you want to be a politician. But is there no bell in this room ?

I'll see how long it will take *to raise a waiter.*"

"What do you want, sir?" grinned a negro almost instantaneously.

"Some brandy and water and half-a-dozen cigars : I am going to write an article."

"Then I do not wish to disturb you," said I, grateful for an opportunity of escaping from the room.

Scarcely was I half an hour down in the reading-room before a huge bell rang for supper. I expected, as usual, a rush into the dining-hall ; but was much surprised in perceiving the quiet gentlemanly manner in which every one took his seat. The supper was excellent, and, what is more, it was well served. I began to perceive that I had fallen into good hands, and was only sorry that an establishment in every respect so unexceptionable should have adopted the vexatious custom of having the roll of travellers called by the bar-keeper, in the manner of some surly sergeant, before accommodating them with a room. A great deal of unpleasant feeling arises from mere mistakes in forms, which may easily be corrected by a little attention to the usages of the world, and which, therefore, cannot be sufficiently recommended to innkeepers.

Early the next morning I found myself safely seated in one of the huge railroad cars which leave Baltimore every morning for Washington. This railroad, I believe, is one of the worst in the United States; the travelling on it being excessively tedious, the stoppages frequent, and the rate very slow. I believe we did not go faster than seven or eight miles an hour, so that we required nearly half a day to complete a journey of about forty English miles. Nothing can be more barren than the country through which the railroad is laid; and the approach to the metropolis is anything but striking, although the entrance is by the way of the Capitol.

Washington is, indeed, a city *sui generis*, of which no European who has not actually seen it can form an adequate idea. Mr. Serullier, formerly minister of France, used to call it "a city of magnificent distances;" but, though this be true, I should rather call it "a city without streets." The Capitol, a magnificent palace, situated on an eminence called Capitol-hill, and the White-house, the dwelling of the President, are the only two specimens of architecture in the whole town; the rest being mere hovels, and even the public buildings, such as the Treasury, War and Navy Departments, and the General

Post-office, little superior to the most ordinary dwelling-houses in Europe. The whole town is, in fact, but an appendix to those two public buildings, a sort of ante-chamber either to the Capitol or to the house of the chief magistrate. If such a town were situated in Europe, one would imagine those buildings to be the residences of princes, and the rest the humble dwellings of their dependants.

The only thing that approaches a street in Washington is Pennsylvania Avenue, a sometimes single, sometimes double row of houses, leading from the Capitol to the White-house. In this street are the two principal hotels of the city, and a considerable number of boarding-houses. The former are two large barracks, capable of holding each from one hundred and fifty to two hundred people; the latter are, for the most part, mean insignificant-looking dens, in which a man finds the worst accommodations at the most exorbitant prices, and must often be glad to be accommodated at all.

The most aristocratic inn in Washington is Gadsby's, though I consider this "to be a mere matter of taste;" the pretensions to aristocracy resting on four clean walls, and a triple row of galleries in the court, which render the distri-

bution of the rooms convenient, and the rooms themselves agreeable and airy. In every other respect I found no difference between Gadsby's and Brown's, or even Fuller's, which is further up towards the President's house; and, in comparison to other first-rate hotels in the United States, the fare and accommodations in all of them are altogether beneath mediocrity. Gadsby, by the by, keeps an excellent assortment of wines, and he is himself a very gentlemanly and agreeable man.

Among the boarding-houses there is, I believe, a good deal of aristocratic classification, owing to the different sets of senators and representatives who establish their clubs in them. Some also there are whose pretensions to gentility are principally founded on the landladies being descended from some ancient family, or on their being related to some distinguished members of Congress. In short, every boarding-house marks a particular shade of aristocracy; the Southern (those for Southern members) being the most refined, and each of them, in spite of the bad living, the focus of a particular coterie.

There is also a hotel in Pennsylvania Avenue, called "The NATIVE American;" probably for the accommodation of such members of Congress

and their friends as think themselves entitled to worse fare than can be obtained at other places, for having the aristocratic preference of birth—no matter where, and of whom, in the United States,—over every unfortunate stranger *directly* descended from Europe. I am not disposed to quarrel with any American for *enjoying his birth*; though I cannot but think that the American Indians are much more entitled to be called “Native Americans” than any descendant from an English, Scotch, Irish, German, French, Dutch, Swedish, Spanish, or Portuguese family that happens to be born in the Union.

The first thing that struck me in Washington was the unusual number of persons perambulating the streets without any apparent occupation, of which every other American city, with the exception of Philadelphia, seems to be entirely drained. If there be poor and idle persons walking the streets of New York, Boston, or Baltimore, it is, I am sorry to say, generally owing to some late arrival from Europe,—some of the steerage passengers being yet left without employment. Washington, however, is a city of *American* idlers,—a set of gentlemen of such peculiar merit as well to deserve a public comment. They live in what is called “elegant style,” rise in the

morning at eight or nine, have breakfast in their own rooms, then smoke five or six cigars until twelve, at which time they dress for the Senate ; few gentlemen ever honouring the *House of Representatives* with their presence, except just before leaving the Capitol.

The Senate of the United States is, indeed, the finest drawing-room in Washington ; for it is there the young women of fashion resort for the purpose of exhibiting their attractions. The Capitol is, in point of fashion, the opera-house of the city ; the House of Representatives being the crush-room. In the absence of a decent theatre, the Capitol furnishes a tolerable place of rendezvous, and is on that account frequented during the whole season—from December until April or May—by every loungeur in the place, and by every *belle* that wishes to become the fashion.

After speaking and talking is over in the Senate, the idlers commence the regular performance of eating, which is no sort of amusement to any one in America who is obliged to dine at an ordinary. For this reason they club together in numbers from four to six, to dine at their rooms ; single dinners being too expensive, and the people who have the means of entertaining

in Washington being not sufficiently numerous to secure every dandy a place at a private gentleman's table.

The routs in Washington, in spite of the small rooms and the economy of refreshments, are delightful, lasting generally from nine in the evening until two in the morning; after which the *élégants*, wholly exhausted from the uncommon exertion of being agreeable four or five hours in succession, repair to some cellar or beef-shop, not quite so well furnished as the common resorts of cabmen and omnibus drivers in London, but which the aristocratic taste of the young men elevates into "refectories."

It is in these cellars that a stranger may become acquainted with "real life in Washington." In the best part of the season, when speeches are plenty and cash flush, the idlers' "refectories" keep open the whole night; the regular eating and drinking, and, as I was informed, also the *gambling*, never commencing until twelve o'clock.

One of these establishments,—the best of the kind I believe in the metropolis,—"the Epicure House," as it is termed, was recommended to me as doing canvass-back ducks in the neatest style, and being always the resort of the most fashionable company. This recommendation, joined to

•

the fact that nothing can be obtained at an inn after the hour of eleven,—a practice which adds much to the convenience of the *innkeepers*,—induced me to try the skill of a coloured cook, and to have a peep at the young men that were called “the first” in the law-giving city.

On inquiring the way, I was pointed to a house forming the corner opposite to Gadsby’s hotel, to which was attached a lamp which gave exactly as much light as was necessary in order not to break one’s neck in descending the staircase which led to the entrance, but left the establishment itself in precisely that sort of obscurity which is always desirable for a place serving as a rendezvous for *comme-il-faut* people. On entering it,—it being only a little after eleven,—I found the room, which was divided into boxes after the manner of a common English eating-house, nearly empty; a few persons only eating scolloped oysters or drinking punch, but a number of black imps slinking about in evident expectation of better business. I hesitated at first whether I should take a seat, the appearance of the table-cloths, cruets, &c. being far from inviting; though the bar was stocked with bottles bearing the inscriptions—“Sillery champaign,” “Klause Johannisberger,” “Marcobrunner,” “Hermitage,” &c.

The bar-keeper, perceiving my want of resolution, came forward, and accosted me in the most polite terms.

“ You wish, perhaps, for a private room, sir ? If you do not want it longer than after midnight, I can give you the one adjoining. At twelve I expect a party who may want it until three or four in the morning.”

“ Thank you ; I do not like to take possession of a room which I am obliged to give up in three quarters of an hour. Have you none other ? ”

“ I have yet another room up stairs ; but it is occupied by a dinner-party, which is not likely to break up till two or three in the morning.”

“ You keep very late hours, then ? ”

“ Why, sir, we commence late. If you stop here till two o'clock, you will see this room crowded. This evening all the gentlemen are at Mrs. * * * 's, who gives nothing but tea and cakes ; which, as you may imagine, is not precisely the thing for young men that are dancing the whole evening. Many of them are yet *growing*, and, as is usually the case with such gentlemen, have an excellent appetite.”

“ And so they come here to sup ? ”

“ They do me that honour, sir ; and I do my best to accommodate them.”

(What a polite publican, thought I, if he were not a mulatto !) “ And what have you fit to eat ? ” demanded I.

“ Fine canvass-back ducks, oysters, and venison. Canvass-back ducks are prime ; just the season. Shall I show you into the other room ? ”

“ No, I would rather take a duck here ; but you must give me a clean table-cloth.”

“ Certainly, sir. What sort of wine will you take ? hock, champaign, claret, madeira, or sherry ? I have got some first-rate Johannisberger and some of Lynch’s claret.”

“ Have you champaign in pint bottles ? ”

“ At your service, sir.—John ! put a clean table-cloth at No. 3. Do you want the papers in the mean while ? ”

In less than fifteen minutes one of the best specimens of that inestimable bird, the canvass-back duck, for which the Americans might justly be envied by European princes, was placed before me, “ with the usual trimmings,” consisting of jelly, butter, beets, and pickles, together with a small bottle of the Napoleon brand champaign. The whole was served in good order ; and I could not but wonder that in a place of so mean and

unfashionable an appearance a person should find such excellent accommodations. What would Mr. Stuart have said if his good fortune had led him to the Epicure House in Washington? I can assure him that in no other place in the United States could he have eaten canvass-back ducks more deserving of praise and comment.

Hardly had I commenced eating, before a noisy uproarious set of men entered the premises, singing and swaggering, and calling in a stentorian voice for cheese and *crackers*.*

“What a d—d shabby party that was!” exclaimed a young man, dressed in the latest New York fashion, with dirty gloves, and his shirt-collar turned down with perspiration; “one of your regular *Boston* ones.† I believe nothing was handed round but lemonade and sponge-cake, and of that there was scarcely enough for the ladies.”

“Why did you not go up stairs?” cried another; “there were plenty of sandwiches, besides a large basin of toddy.”

“How could he have found time for that; he

* A small biscuit, not a firework.

† Parties without supper are, in Washington and the Southern States, called “Boston parties;” for what reason it is impossible to say, the Boston parties being generally renowned for their rather ostentatious suppers.

was all attention to Miss * * * ; were you not, John ?” ejaculated a little creature dressed in boots.

“ Ah ! are you here ?” cried John ; “ we lost you at the door ; how did you get here ?”

“ On my legs,” replied the little fellow. “ Did you expect me to pay two dollars to one of those rascally niggers for the pleasure of a *ride* ?” †

“ But did you wear boots at the ball ?”

“ Certainly not ; I took them off in the entry, and put them on again as I came out. I always carry my shoes in my pocket when I go to a party.”

“ That ’s regular Boston fashion !” shouted the company. “ How much do you make by it a year ?”

“ I *save* by it more than a hundred dollars ; and ‘ a dollar saved is a dollar earned,’ says Franklin.”

“ But what do you do with your boots at the party ?”

“ I *hide* them as well as I can ; I have only lost one pair in Boston. They were taken away by mistake ; but I advertised them in the papers, and got them back again. But I say, John !

† “ Ride ” is in America constantly used for “ drive.”

how do you stand with Miss * * * ? All right, hem ? ”

“ For mercy’s sake, don’t bother me now ! ” cried John ; “ I am too dry to talk. ” (Turning to a bronze-faced mulatto boy, “ Why, you cursed little imp, cannot you bring me the whisky punch I ordered ? ”) “ To dance a cotillon lasting three hours ! Those girls’ feet don’t seem ever to get tired. ”

“ And a German cotillon, too, ” rejoined a tall gentlemanly figure, who appeared to be a Southerner ; “ if it had not been for the mazurka, which some of our ladies still object to, because there is too much whirling and dancing on the heels in it, I should not have had a moment’s rest. I wonder how the women can stand it ! ”

“ And then the *gallopade* ! why, that alone wears out a pair of shoes, ” cried the Bostonian ; “ the mazurka only requires *heeling*. ”

“ They ought to make you president of the savings’ bank ! ” observed the Southerner.

“ That is, ” said John, “ if he understands saving other people’s money as well as his own. ”

By this time the waiter returned with the punch, a huge lump of cheese, and a basket of biscuits, which was immediately seized upon and devoured, as if the persons present were the half-starved crew of some American whaler just re-

turned from a three years' cruise round Cape Horn.

"I say, Jim," said John, "did you taste the wine?"

"I did," replied Jim; "but I could not swallow it. It was not worth three dollars a dozen."

"I believe it was Sicily madeira."

"Heaven knows *what* sort of madeira it was; I took to the toddy.

"If these ladies had not kept me going, I should have done so too."

"That's the pleasure of courting," said Jim tauntingly.

"Why, a man has to come to it some time or other," said John.

"Miss * * * is certainly a pretty girl; but, if I were in your place, I should not like her flirting in Washington. Washington is the worst place for a young lady in the United States. It is altogether too European."

"I do not like it myself," observed the Southerner; "nor the custom of our fashionable women to bring their daughters here just as they have left the boarding-school, in order to introduce them to the *beau monde*."

"And to teach them the gallopade and the mazurka, which is setting a premium on *foreigners*," said John with some bitterness.

“Don’t be angry,” cried Jim. “You don’t expect to be cut out by a German or a Pole, do you?”

“You may go to —— with your insinuation,” cried John: “what I object to in the society of Washington is, that it teaches women to *amuse* themselves; or, rather, that it obliges *us* to amuse *them*.”

“That is rather bad,” interrupted a thin pale-looking gentleman with spectacles; “as it must necessarily interfere with our serious pursuits.”

“Such as drinking punch, and playing cards,” observed the Southerner.

“I mean *literary* pursuits,” said the man with spectacles.

“Oh yes! we forgot that. Mr. * * * writes the *on dits* for the New York * * *; of course he has no time to throw away upon women. ‘Time is money,’ says Franklin.—I say, George, did you win or lose at whist?”

“I won twenty dollars.”

“Then you neither lost your time nor your money.”

“If that’s the case, George must pay the punch,” shouted the company.

“George is going to do no such thing,” replied the *littérateur*.

“Then let us toss up for it,” proposed Jim.

“That would not do,” objected John; “he, as a Yankee, would have the advantage in *guessing*.”

“I think it best,” said George, “for every man to pay his own reckoning.” So saying, he called the waiter, paid for his punch, and, without uttering another syllable, left the party to settle their accounts after their own manner.

“What a selfish, unsociable, stingy fellow that is,” cried Jim; “would not even toss up for it! and yet—would you believe it?—he is engaged to one of the prettiest girls in New England.”

“She probably marries him for his literary reputation. Boston women are sometimes in love with that!” said John. “But let us now toss up for the reckoning.”

“It’s all paid,” observed the waiter,” pointing to the Southerner.

“Just like him; always throwing away his money!” muttered John, pocketing his piece. Jim made a bow, and swore he would be revenged: but all finally agreed to go home, visibly contented.

Scarcely had they left, before a large party of about fifteen or twenty young men, among whom there appeared to be some Europeans, entered the

room, swearing that they had been done out of a regular meal, and that they were now going to make up for it. "Let us have three or four canvass-back ducks, and some of Lynch's claret," cried one of them; "the devil take the stuff they call toddy! I had as lief swallow prussic acid,—it has given me the cramp in my stomach."

"If you had drunk it here," grinned the waiter, "you would feel all the better for it; we make that article first-rate."

"Hold your tongue!" cried the gentleman, "and do as you are bid."

"All right, sir!" said the negro, and went to speak to the cook.

"Can we go into the other room?" demanded one of the party.

"Gentlemen are dining there," replied the bar-keeper.

"Gambling you mean, don't you?"

"It's no business of mine to inquire *what* they are doing; they have been there ever since dinner."

"Then they must leave soon, and we may have the room."

"I don't think they will," rejoined the bar-keeper. "Whenever they come to dine, they generally stay for breakfast."

"And the room adjoining?"

“Is already engaged. I expect the gentlemen every minute.”

The party cast an inquiring look at one another, and then gathered round a small table as well as they could, quietly awaiting the arrival of the supper.

In less than fifteen minutes from this time, it being nearly twelve o'clock, the whole room was filled to overflowing with the most motley assemblage of persons I ever beheld in my life. It was a group worthy of being preserved on canvass. Besides the party already mentioned, there were gathered round the chimney a parcel of Kentuckians, a giant race of men, full of strange oaths and tobacco-juice, discussing politics, and betting heavily on the issue of certain matters then under debate. Their language, surely, was not altogether intelligible to me; but what I *did* understand convinced me that they are justly reputed for their wit and humour. One of them—standing, I should judge, six feet two—was a good-natured punster, who, in spite of the serious turn their conversation had taken, kept the company in a continual roar of laughter.

Round the bar was stationed a more noisy and less original set of men; such as a person might

see in any of the larger gin-shops of London on a Saturday evening. They were vulgar and “uproarious,” smoked bad cigars and spit promiscuously round the room, while the Kentuckians showed their better breeding by always hitting the same spot. A third party, evidently composed of *young bucks*, dressed in the latest London fashions, with perfumed hair and real French kid gloves, were discussing the merits of women; which they did *con amore*, using all the English slang they had collected from the newspapers, or from fashionable novels, and taking great pains to appear as outlandish as possible. The intervals between these clusters were filled up with single gentlemen, of all ages and descriptions, and in every possible state of consciousness,—from that of a perfect knowledge of “the thousand natural shocks this flesh is heir to,” to that of the most total oblivion, and triumph “o’er a’ the ills o’ life.”

What gave a peculiar character to this little pandemonium was the continual apparition and vanishing of the black, brown, and yellow waiters; all shining with perspiration, and leaving, as they passed, something not altogether unlike the odour of brimstone behind them. These exhalations,

the steam of the viands, the smell of rum, brandy, and tobacco, independent of the corrupt, sultry air produced by the presence of a large number of persons in a small room, soon obliged me to quit the scene of merriment; and, in half an hour later, I found myself safely in bed at Gadsby's.

CHAPTER II.

Corps Diplomatique in Washington.—What a Fashionable Lady thinks of an Ambassador.—The Secretary of the Treasury.—Popularity-hunting of American Statesmen.—Its influence on National Politics.—Mr. Woodbury's Hospitality to Literary Men.—Henry Clay.—Thomas H. Benton.—Salis Wright.—James Buchanan.—Extraordinary Dinner-bell.—Office-hunters in Washington.—State of Finance of the City.—Anecdote of General Jackson and the Office-seeker.—General Character of Washington Society compared with that of other American Cities.

O momentary grace of mortal man,
Which we more hunt for than the grace of God !
Who builds his hope in air of your fair looks,
Lives like a drunken sailor on a mast ;
Ready, with every nod, to tumble down
Into the fatal bowels of the deep.

King Richard III. Act iii. Scene 5.

THE next day I looked over my letters of introduction, which, being principally addressed to members of the cabinet and the *corps diplomatique*, I determined to deliver in person. The influence of the diplomatic agents in Washington on the moral and social habits of the people, is much greater than their effect on the politics of the

State ; the executive power of the President and Council being not only limited by the Senate, but also indirectly by the House of Representatives, and the manifestation of public opinion at the annual elections. A minister in Washington is, with regard to his diplomatic agency, pretty much confined to official acts, such as may at any time be made public : his influence with a particular member of the cabinet, or with the President himself,—his success with a particular coterie,—his intrigues against any person that may have rendered himself obnoxious to his government, are of little or no avail at the Congress, with which, as yet, no foreign diplomatist has attempted a political relation. But, in point of fashion, their power is unlimited ; their decisions being quoted as oracles, and their manners made the standard of society. In Washington, no party is considered fashionable unless graced by some distinguished senator, and a few members of the *corps diplomatique*. Between the latter and the senators exists yet this relation, that every senator has a right to introduce a gentleman to a foreign minister, either personally, or by leaving his card together with that of his friend ; a privilege which is denied to the more vulgar members of the House of Representatives.

As far as I was able to ascertain the influence of foreign residents in Washington, it was confined, with the representative of the greatest power in Christendom, to setting the example of genuine hospitality in the shape of the most prosperous dinner parties given in the metropolis, — his *attachés*, I believe, went *fox-hunting* in the outskirts of the city; with the representative of the land of chivalry and tigers, to setting the example of taste in the shape of regular *soirées musicales*; in the clever and witty envoy extraordinary and minister plenipotentiary of a northern power, to introducing the fashion of dancing *on the heels*,* — which, by the by, was a pretty little manœuvre on the part of the old gentleman, who had long ago lost the use of his *toes* by the gout; in the representative of a literary court, to the privilege of spouting literature and science to a *sober* audience, &c. The ministers of the Italian courts, who had the longest string of titles printed on their cards, had no distinct influence, except in setting the fashion of eating and drinking gracefully — at another man's table.

To understand the humour and good cheer which reign among the *corps diplomatique* in Washington, it is sufficient to know that it consists almost

* The mazurka.

wholly of bachelors, who, according to the *étiquette* of the place, enjoy the privilege of inviting *ladies* to their parties.* This is certainly an enviable distinction; and, if anything can reconcile a man to living in single blessedness, it is, I am sure, an ambassadorship in the American metropolis. Yet, great as the advantages of such a situation are to the ministers of England, Russia, and even France, they prove a source of incessant vexation to the envoys of minor powers. I was told of several of the ministers who lived in houses of such frail construction as to make the ladies afraid of walking into them, much less to attempt a dance; they said that “they regretted extremely that it was not in their power to give parties, it being useless to send out invitations when the ladies vowed they would not come.”

In what light ambassadors are held *by the ladies* will appear from the following anecdote:—At a dinner party to which most of the representatives of the greater powers and some of the smaller ones were invited, one of them, a jolly old bachelor of the English school, attempted a song, which so much gratified the ladies, that it was proposed every gentleman present should, in turn, follow the example. Russia and some other great powers

* My friend speaks of the year 1833.

immediately obeyed the summons ; but when the turn came to the representative of a new court, he indignantly exclaimed, “ *Mon roi ne m’a pas envoyé ici pour chanter.*”—“ Well,” answered a lady, “ if *you* will not sing, we shall ask your gallant king to send us somebody else who *will*.”

Being made acquainted with the *étiquette* of Washington, I ordered a carriage, and inquired the directions of the persons on whom I wished to call.

“ Bless your soul, sir !” cried the landlord, “ that is not at all necessary in this city ; all you have to do is to tell the name of the person you wish to call on to the ‘ driver,’ and he will carry you there with the greatest possible speed.”

“ That may be with regard to the President’s house and the residences of foreign ministers ; but I have also letters to some of the senators, and even representatives of Congress.”

“ That don’t signify,” rejoined the landlord. “ These black fellows not only know the residences of every senator and distinguished member of Congress, but also those of the higher public officers, clerks, editors of newspapers, &c. Once under the care of a black ‘ driver,’ it is quite needless for you to know the direction of a single gentleman in this city.”

With this piece of information I “embarked,” as the Americans say, “on board of a Washington hack,”—the usual means of conveyance for gentlemen; and in a short time found myself *tête-à-tête* with the editor of one of the first papers. I found him a plain unassuming gentleman, though he enjoyed the reputation of being a man of extraordinary talents. He regretted that he could not be of more service to me during my short stay in the city; but, notwithstanding, promised to introduce me personally to some of the most distinguished senators of his party. “I have nothing to do with the rest,” added he; “but I dare say you have letters to some of them, and one will cheerfully introduce you to all the others.” He then unceremoniously excused himself with pressing business, invited me to dine with him *sans cérémonie* on the Sunday following, in company with a select number of *his party*, and almost bowed me out of the room.

“A singular character!” said I to myself, as I again stepped into my carriage and ordered the coachman to proceed to Mr. Woodbury, the secretary of the Treasury. “I have, after all, done wrong to omit the *De*.”

I was so fortunate as to find Mr. Woodbury at home, and was at once ushered into the parlour.

I found him surrounded by his family, equally distinguished for beauty and accomplishments. Mr. Woodbury is a gentleman very nearly, or quite, fifty years of age, of agreeable address and kind manners; though, probably owing to his being born and brought up in New England, a little ceremonious. It has been the fashion in America for the last eight or ten years to decry "the secretary of the Treasury," and to impeach even his honesty; as if the money withdrawn from the United States' bank had filled his coffers and those of the President.

Mr. Woodbury is a man of great tact for business, and of the most indefatigable application; but the style of his official documents is often laborious and cumbrous, with an occasional attempt at laconism, which renders the fault still more apparent. But, notwithstanding this imperfection, his annual reports contain a vast deal of information, and the most minute statistical details of the progress of agriculture, manufacture, and commerce, not only of America, but of every other country. To judge fairly and impartially of the ability of Mr. Woodbury as a head of department, it is necessary to consider that every question which has agitated the country ever since the elevation of General Jackson, has turned on the

subject of finance, and that therefore the secretary of the Treasury was placed in the most difficult and conspicuous position of any public man in the United States, the President himself scarcely excepted.

Mr. Woodbury has been represented, not only in America, but also in England, as a cunning politician and popularity-hunter. This reproach, as far as I have been able to judge,—and I believe I have had as good an opportunity of observing Mr. Woodbury, and the course of public events, as any one who has felt himself called upon to publish his lucubrations to the world,—is altogether malicious and groundless. Mr. Woodbury owes his elevation to his firmness of character and his sincere attachment to republican institutions. So far from courting public favour, he is but too frequently wanting in those trifling attentions and nice observances which insure popularity. I ought yet to observe that Mr. Woodbury has a taste for letters, which he manifests in the best possible manner, by being kind to those who have more leisure than he to cultivate them. Mr. Willis,—the same that dined at the Duke of Gordon's,—Dr. L * * *, and a number of minor stars, are indebted to his kind hospitality ; and I myself can

testify to his condescension even to ordinary men.

What I have said on the subject of Mr. Woodbury's popularity naturally induces me to say a few words on the peculiar character of American politicians. The question proposed by a member of that body is generally this:—"What measure can we carry to defeat our antagonists?" neither party appearing to have any fixed political tenets further than refer to the public revenue, which is a home question with every man and every party. On this account we often see in the United States the Democratic party assume the very principles they once denounced in the Federalists; and, on the other hand, the Federalists profess the doctrines which they most abhorred in the Democrats. The fact is, very few senators, representatives, and men in office have a clear understanding of the vast importance of the principles they maintain; nor do they seem to have a correct notion of republicanism, *as contrasted with other forms of government*. But then, how many of them possess an adequate knowledge of history—even of their own country? They all have, indeed, a certain republican instinct, or what the Americans call a correct *feeling*, of what is compatible with the text of their constitution; but not many of them,

I believe, take a philosophical view of their government, such as would enable them to reduce the whole to a *system*, and to perceive accurately the bearing of every new question on the principles laid down in the national charter. Nor would such a metaphysical knowledge of the constitution materially benefit a partisan leader, who never asks what is right or wrong in the abstract, but merely "What do *my constituents* consider as right or wrong? What is the opinion of the public on this subject?" When a new question is proposed, he thrusts out his *feelers*, to feel the public pulse; and, having ascertained that, he makes his speeches accordingly, in order that the people may see that he is actively engaged on their side; for on the side that beats he *must* be, or he is "a ruined man."

This sort of moral cowardice, which more or less pervades all classes of society, and of which the example is set in Congress, is certainly one of the worst features of American politics; and would almost make a man doubt the beneficial influence of republican institutions on the developement of mind and character, if their numerous blessings in other respects did not prove them capable of insuring the happiness of a people.

When I thus speak of American politicians, I

do not mean to draw envious comparisons between them and European statesmen. I belong neither to that class of Europeans that cannot pronounce the name of America without a grudge, nor to that class of fashionable and travelled Americans that cannot find anything in their own country equal to Europe. On the contrary, I maintain that there is quite as much intelligence, application, and certainly of virtue, in the members of the cabinet at Washington, as can be found in the ministerial council of any European prince. And I say this, fully aware of its producing more sneers among the higher classes in America than in Europe.

If the conduct of every European minister were inquired into, like that of a head of department in Washington, — if his private and public transactions were canvassed with the same unrelenting severity as in America, — if he had to account for every one of his acts, not merely to Parliament, or, in course of time, to a limited number of electors, but to the people at large, speaking annually through the ballot-boxes, — then, I am afraid, few would be found capable of sustaining their position for a single year.

An American statesman has the most difficult position of any one in the world, for he has to

solve a great and intricate problem in the presence of a multitude of spectators, who are never to see that he is puzzled, and who never have the patience to wait for the end, but condemn a measure from the first moment its immediate results do not answer their expectations. For this reason few men in America, even if they possess the talent, have the *courage* to propose a radical reform of abuses, or to work some signal good, unless the execution of it is sure to be *step by step* applauded by large majorities. It is this courting of popularity which is the bane of even the best statesmen in the United States; but it is in part forced upon them,—it is the *conditio sine quâ non* of their usefulness.

From the secretary of the Treasury I drove to the lodgings of Mr. Henry Clay, the celebrated senator from Kentucky. I found this extraordinary man, who was then already a little past his prime, the very type of what passes in Europe, ever since the clever caricatures of Mrs. Trollope, as “an American character.” Mr. Clay stands upwards of six feet; has a semi-Indian, half-human half-savage countenance, in which, however, the intellectual strongly preponderates over the animal. His manners, at first sight, appear to be extremely vulgar; and yet he is graceful, and even dignified,



HENRY CLAY

in his intercourse with strangers. He chews tobacco, drinks whisky punch, gambles, puts his legs on the table or the chimney, and spits, as an American would say, “like a regular Kentucky hog-driver;” and yet he is all gentleness, politeness, and cordiality in the society of ladies. Add to this that his organs of speech are the most melodious; and that, with great imagination and humour, he combines manly eloquence, and the power of sarcasm in the most extraordinary degree; and it will easily be conceived why he should have been able to captivate high and low,—*l’homme du salon*, and the “squatter” in the Western wilderness.

Much as Mr. Clay is esteemed in America, I do not think the people have as yet done justice to his talents. These, to be sure, are, owing to his advanced age, on the decline; but even the *remnants* of a mind like Clay’s are great, and entitle him to be ranked among the greatest living statesmen. He was for a long time the advocate of the system of internal improvements, combated with so much success by General Jackson. He advocated successively the establishment of national roads and canals, the continuance of a United States’ bank, the tariff, and, in short, every measure conducive to centralization. That this system, while it strengthens the government, and introduces

order and uniformity into the administration of the country, diminishes, at the same time, the liberties of the individual States, and, in general, ill agrees with the principles of a pure democracy, such as are laid down in the American constitution, no one, who is not himself interested in the question, can reasonably deny; but it would be equally absurd to suppose every man who is an advocate of a central measure, to be at once an enemy to republican institutions, and a traitor to his country.

Mr. Clay advocated every measure he proposed, not as a mere partisan, but as a statesman who clearly saw its first and ultimate bearings on national politics. His is a mind of vast conceptions, which, if it had not at one time speculated too much in elections, — I allude to the trick he played at the election of Mr. John Quincy Adams, — might have long ago enabled him to fill the station to which his unfortunate ambition a little too early aspired.

From Mr. Clay I called upon Mr. Thomas H. Benton, the democratic senator from Missouri. This gentleman is altogether in a false position; for he is, in my opinion, as much over-rated by his friends as he is under-rated by his enemies. I was the bearer of a letter to him by one of his

most intimate friends, and a person of high standing and much influence in the country ; and yet the reception I met with was cold and ceremonious,—his manners forced, and almost ludicrously dignified. The truth is, Mr. Benton behaves on most occasions like a man who has not yet found his level in society ; being continually on his guard lest he might not be done justice to, and afraid lest his unrestrained familiar manners might derogate from the estimation in which he is held by the public. The first impression that he makes upon a stranger I should judge to be decidedly unfavourable, though he greatly improves upon acquaintance, and, as he drops his dignity, shows his truly estimable points of character. As Mr. Benton's democracy is probably proof against the seductions of Europe,—a thing I would not assert of one American out of ten,—I would recommend to him a trip to Paris,—not to London,—in order that he might learn to carry himself with a little more ease. It would vastly improve his manners and general appearance, and perhaps make him find favour even with *female* philosophers.*

* The reader will remember with what severity Miss Martineau commented on his talents, though she had only seen him once or twice *en passant*.

Mr. Benton is perhaps the most unfortunate speaker in the Senate ; not, indeed, as regards the substance of his discourses, most of which are clever and full of information ; but with regard to his disjointed, broken, sometimes loud, and again sometimes scarcely audible, delivery. This is undoubtedly the reason why his speeches are so much under-rated, though they contain more solid matter of statistics and history than can be found in the perhaps more eloquent efforts of his colleagues. Mr. Benton is a most uncommonly laborious man, and is constantly collecting facts, not only in America but also in Europe, in support of his political doctrines ; though his partiality for France, and his eternal and irksome comparisons between the republic under the consulate of Bonaparte and the confederation of the United States, rather injure than establish his theories with a considerable portion of the American public. Another fault with which Mr. Benton has been reproached consists in his indelicate allusions to his personal prowess. Every one knows that Mr. Benton is as brave as Cæsar ; but it is not necessary that he himself should refer to it. An appeal to arms in a deliberative assembly is always vulgar, if not absolutely savage ; and ought to be avoided in the most studious

manner, not only by every man of religion and principle, but also by every gentleman of good taste. There is, as yet, too much bullyism in the legislative assemblies of America ; many worthy representatives forgetting that it is easier to fight for, than to establish by argument, the correctness of a political principle. On the whole, Mr. Benton is a clever politician, an industrious collector of statistics, and, with the exception of his delivery, a most skilful debater in Congress. He has, during a certain period, been almost the only and valiant defender of General Jackson's policy in the Senate; and has, by his perseverance, honesty, and good faith, become universally popular among the labouring classes, whose interests he has during his whole life constantly and successfully advocated.

My next visit was to Mr. Salis Wright, senator from the State of New York, the avowed democratic champion of that State, and indeed a man of the most extraordinary talents. He is one of those men whose urbanity and frankness the Americans indicate by saying, " he has not a bit of starch in him." Mr. Wright is a statesman, not a mere politician ; and will, if his talents be properly placed before the public, play an important part in the history of his country. He and Mr.

Calhoun are almost the only two senators free from the "Congressional" sin of making everlasting speeches. He is always concise, rigorously logical, and, what is very rare in an American politician, singularly free from personal abuse. His mind is of that rigid composition which does not allow him to depart, for one instant, from the point under consideration; and hence, instead of indulging himself in irrelevant rhapsodies, sneers, and side-thrusts at the character of his antagonists, he confines himself strictly to his argument; a method which, if it were imitated by every senator, would enable them to transact the same business in about the one-seventh part of the time now needed, saving annually a sum of not less than a million of dollars.

Mr. Wright's delivery is rapid, but distinct; proving that every thought is digested and arranged, and flowing from a well-stored mind. In his private life he is not a fashionable, but a plain, unassuming, modest gentleman; who, notwithstanding his own brevity, possesses that most extraordinary talent of powerful minds—of listening patiently to the tedious prosings of others. I saw him, in his own room, listen to an endless recital of an Indian campaign given by an officer in the army, without even once heaving a sigh,

though the thermometer ranged at 96°; his room being one of the closest in the whole city of Washington. At last, having listened to the hero for more than an hour, he told him patiently that he found his story exceedingly entertaining; but, having a few words to say to one of his friends waiting in the parlour, he should be obliged to leave him for a few moments, in order to afterwards hear the conclusion of so interesting a narrative. I must yet observe that Mr. Wright is seldom seen at the crack parties in Washington, and is, therefore, not in the way of being much noticed by foreign tourists.

My next call was on my old acquaintance, Mr. Buchanan, senator from Pennsylvania. This is a gentleman of plain common sense, agreeable and dignified manners, and the most resolved unchangeable disposition. As a speaker, he does not attempt to soar on the wings of genius; but his arguments being always founded on experience and practical good sense, and his unimpeachable honesty being proverbial, he is always sure of producing effect. Mr. Buchanan never had the character of an office-seeker, though he has always been one of the most strenuous defenders of General Jackson's policy; and is even now rarely seen at the White-house or the levees of the cabinet

ministers. And yet in his externals he is the most courtier-like senator in Congress ; his dress and manners being always what a master of ceremonies at any European court could wish them to be in order to usher him into the presence of his royal master. In addition to this, Mr. Buchanan is a bachelor, and not yet past the age at which bachelors cease to be interesting ; which accounts sufficiently for his being universally beloved, even by those who are opposed to him in politics. Indeed, I heard it positively asserted, more than four years ago, that he was “ too much of a gentleman,” and “ had remained too long in the Senate,” to continue much longer an advocate of democracy. This was evidently among the *on dits*, which, as far as regards the conclusion, had not the least foundation in it. Mr. Buchanan is, at this moment, as sound a democrat as ever ; proving the vanity and falsehood of Cowper’s assertion, that

“ ——— the age of virtuous liberty is past,
And we are deep in that of cold pretence ;
Patriots are grown too shrewd to be sincere,
And we too wise to trust them.”

On my return to the inn I found a numerous assemblage of gentlemen waiting on the piazza for the ringing of the dinner-bell ; which, at

Gadsby's, owing to the vast extent of the premises, is affixed to a small steeple on the top of the house, in order that it may warn not only the gentlemen who may be engaged in politics in their rooms, but also those who may be lounging anywhere within a quarter of a mile from the place of feeding. During the time the table was setting, the dining-room itself was carefully locked, in order "to prevent impatient people from spoiling the looks of it" before it was quite ready. While thus in expectation of the things that were to come, I asked the bar-keeper how many senators and representatives had taken rooms in the house; as, from the number of gentlemen present, it was quite evident his inn was full.

"Only two, sir," replied he.

"And what is the reason you have so few?"

"Because our terms are too high; they can get board cheaper at a boarding-house. We entertain generally but transient people,—lobby-members; gentlemen with their families, who come here to spend the season; now and then a letter-writer, though these are usually stopping at Brown's; and perhaps occasionally a spy."

"And are all these men better able to pay for their board than senators and representatives of Congress?"

“Whether they be better able to pay, I know not ; they seem at least to be *more willing* to do so. If they have not got money, they ‘*hire*’ it. Washington is the ‘*ruination*’ place of the United States. Many a man comes here in tolerable circumstances, and leaves the place as a beggar, with his money spent, and his business neglected. So much for politics !”

“That’s no very flattering picture of your town.”

“Why, sir,” said one of the gentlemen near me, “how many persons do you think are solvent in this city ”

“I will hope a great many.”

“I do not think,” replied he, “there are six persons in town able to pay their debts, if their estates were to be settled to-morrow. The corporation itself has more debts than it can conveniently manage. There is not a city in the Union as badly off as ours.”

“And then what a continual influx of paupers !” interrupted the bar-keeper ; “all coming here to seek office, to see the President, and to avail themselves of their acquaintance with one or the other member, to obtain a place for themselves or one of their relations. Would you believe that people come here from a distance of

from six hundred to a thousand miles, to hunt an appointment of six hundred dollars a year; and that, in order to enable them to get home again, after they have spent their last farthing, the President is often obliged to pay their passage out of his own pocket?"

"I can testify to that," said one of the gentlemen; "General Jackson has done so more than once. When they first come here, they expect nothing less than an appointment of two thousand dollars a year; but by degrees their expectations become more moderate: they would then be satisfied with a clerkship; by and by with a still more subordinate station; and at last they would be glad if any one would pay their bill, and enable them to get home again. I remember a most remarkable story, which was current here shortly after the election of General Jackson, and which is singularly characteristic of the notions of our people as respects the power of the executive.

"One morning, scarcely a fortnight after the General's arrival at the White-house, a shabby-genteel looking man presented himself at his parlour, and, after the usual salutation and shaking of hands, expressed his joy at seeing the venerable old gentleman at last hold the situ-

ation of chief magistrate of the country, to which his bravery, his talents, and his unimpeachable rectitude fully entitled him. ‘We have had a hard time of it,’ said he, ‘in our little place; but our exertions were unremitting: I myself went round to stimulate my neighbours, and at last the victory was ours. We beat them by a majority of ten votes, and I now behold the result of that glorious triumph!’ The General thanked him in terms of studied politeness, assuring him that he would resign his office in an instant if he did not think his election gave satisfaction to a vast majority of the people; and at last regretted his admirer’s zeal for the public weal should have been so severely taxed on his account. ‘Oh, no matter for that, sir!’ said he; I did it with pleasure,—I did it for myself and for my country’ (the General bowed); ‘and I now come to congratulate you on your success’ (the General bowed again). ‘I thought, sir,’ continued he, ‘that, as you are now President of the United States, I might perhaps be useful to you in some official capacity.’ (The General looked somewhat embarrassed.) ‘Pray, sir, have you already made a choice of your cabinet ministers?’—‘I have,’ was the reply of the General.—‘Well, no matter for that; I shall be satisfied

with an embassy to Europe.'—'I am sorry to say there is no vacancy.'—'Then you will perhaps require a head-clerk in the department of State?'—'These are generally appointed by the respective secretaries.'—'I am very sorry for that: then I must be satisfied with some inferior appointment.'—'I never interfere with these: you must address yourself to the heads of departments.'—'But could I not be postmaster in Washington? Only think, General, how I worked for you!'—'I am much obliged to you for the good opinion you entertain of me, and for your kind offices at the last election; but the postmaster for the city of Washington is already appointed.'—'Well, I don't particularly care for that; I should be satisfied with being his clerk.'—'This is a subject you must mention to the postmaster.'—'Why, then, General,' exclaimed the disappointed candidate for office, 'haven't you got an old black coat?' You may well imagine that the General gave him one.

"As extravagant as this story appears, I can assure you that there are at any time in Washington hundreds of persons seeking employment of some sort or other; nine-tenths of whom return home disappointed, cursing the ingratitude of those whom they have elevated by their suffrages,

and who are now so monstrously ungrateful as to suffer them to gain a livelihood by common labour. All these men finish by joining the opposition, expecting to be treated with more consideration by the next administration."

Scarcely had he finished, before the bell, or rather the tocsin, sounded for dinner. In an instant the whole company, consisting of more than a hundred persons, were seated at table,—the dinner, including soups and desserts, being served at once,—and in less than ten minutes the greater portion of them began already to disperse. I had seen much fast eating in the United States, especially on board of steam-boats; but nothing to compare to the rapidity with which meals are despatched in Washington. What astonished me most was, that most of the gentlemen, very unlike those of Boston, New York, or Philadelphia, did not leave table in order immediately to attend to business; but merely to walk or stand on the piazza, smoke, read the papers, or talk politics.

Washington, as I observed before, is the only city of idlers in the whole Union; and, for a man that is not a manufacturer or a merchant, quite an agreeable residence. Despite of its ridiculous extent, and the miserable and scattered situation of the dwelling-houses, it is a focus of intellect,

and contains more resources for a man of education than any other Transatlantic city. It is in Washington where the national mind is formed ; where local prejudices vanish under the influence of more enlarged political views ; where, if I may use the expression, the totality of the American people absorbs the provincialism of the different sections of the country. It is the only city in the United States, north of the Potomac, where a man is not bored with the everlasting talk of business,—where the *markets* are not considered the most important topic of conversation.

Literary and professional men, though they are tolerated in other American cities, and, from vanity and ostentation, occasionally shown up, or, as a clever writer on diplomacy has it, “used by the ladies as a pepper-box,” find their level only in Washington. Even statesmen like Webster, Clay, Calhoun, Wright, &c. are at home only listened to from complacency, unless they touch upon a subject immediately affecting the interest of their particular State ; but, arrived in Washington, they find themselves at once drawn into a circle of attraction, which not only furnishes food for their minds, but, from the nature of its composition, acts as a stimulus on their energies. Washington, in fine, is the only place in America

where talent is esteemed on account of itself,—not because it enables the person endowed with it “to get handsome things.”

To call a man “visionary,” or to consider his talents useless to society, because he cannot immediately reduce them into “shoes and stockings for paupers,” marks a low estimate of humanity; and, in spite of the greatest political progress, a backward state of civilization. I have heard gentlemen in the Northern States boast of having worked sixteen hours a day in a manufactory, or in a store, as if they had actually benefited the world with their manual labour. The thought never struck them that they might have been more useful to society by employing poor men to do the same work for them, and reserving their faculties, if such they had, for some occupation that had some relish of intellect in it. As long as the rich men in America think it more creditable to themselves to compete with the wages of the poor by assuming a part of their labour, than by cultivating the higher branches of knowledge to increase the floating intellect, American society may abound in common sense, but it will prove the grave of talent and genius. All this, fortunately, does not apply to Washington, in which the mass of pro-

perty is really so small in proportion to the intellect that governs it, as to leave a large balance in favour of the latter.

It cannot be doubted but that the vastness of material interests in the Northern States crushes the loftier aspirings of the mind, though it may be favourable to a certain degree of elementary instruction and general information very well compatible with a total neglect of the higher branches of knowledge, and the absence of taste. It is certainly a matter of rejoicing, not only for the Americans, but for every philanthropist, that there should exist at least one country in the world emphatically to be termed "the land of beef and pudding, clean shirts, and whole stockings for all;" but in these things does not yet consist the ultimate happiness of a people, or its capacity for great and generous actions.

That the great mass of the American people are further advanced, not only in politics, but in general civilization, than any nation of Europe, the English themselves not excepted, no one acquainted with the state of society in the United States will venture to deny: the question only is, whether that advanced position contains also the germ of further progress; and whether the direction civilization is taking in America is sure of

leading to the developement of the higher faculties. A nation may, like the Germans, be too exclusively engaged in learned and literary pursuits, and thereby neglect to provide for those physical comforts which, after all, contribute so much to men's happiness ; but it is also possible to give to the latter more than their full share of attention, to the total neglect of every noble and disinterested pursuit.

The apology one continually hears in the United States, " We are a young people,"—" you cannot expect us to be as far advanced as other nations,"—" we have not yet the means," &c.—are, as regards the Eastern and Atlantic States, nothing but idle cant. The *West* may excuse itself for the want of refinement by the prodigious amount of labour and personal exertion incidental to the settlement of a wilderness; but the Northern and Eastern people have no such excuse for being altogether absorbed in money-making. There is more property accumulated in Boston, New York, and Philadelphia than in any German town of the same extent; the intercourse with Europe is constant; the treasures of science and literature as much unlocked to the Americans as to any other people; and if, notwithstanding all this, these departments remain still

neglected, it can only be because there is no real taste for them, and because *other pursuits are more sure of securing the respect of society*. As long as the salary of a head-clerk in a respectable counting-room surpasses that of a professor of mathematics and astronomy in the first and oldest American university, and as long as the company of the latter is hardly considered good enough for a wholesale dealer in dry goods or an auctioneer, it is useless to talk of being “a young people,” “of having no time for literary pursuits,” &c. The age of the nation has nothing to do with it; it is *the taste of the higher classes*, who rather imitate the follies of fashionable European life, than the European student in his closet or the munificence of his patron.

“What a boor that fellow is!” exclaimed a Boston lawyer, half audibly, at a fashionable party in that city, pointing to a young man wearing boots.—“But, sir, they are dress boots,” said I; “I have seen them worn by English gentlemen.”—“Oh, then I have no objection to them!” The young man who wore them had just returned from England, and was showing off his new fashion. Why do the hundreds and thousands of young Americans that overrun Europe, and put ministers and consuls in re-

quisition to be presented at the different courts, not visit the more humble dwellings of men of letters, or the *ateliers* of artists, and on their return show off something else than their heels?—

Answer. “Because the heels are most likely to be observed; and a man more easily pardoned for ignorance or stupidity than for unacquaintance with the usages of Europe.” The Americans in Europe just float on the surface of society, and it is consequently only the froth of it which they afterwards transplant to their own country.

Washington, as I have said before, is a city to which people come to *spend* money, not to *make* it. The hum and bustle of business nowhere obtrude themselves on one's ears, men's minds are occupied with more enlarged views of society; and conversation, instead of being confined to a narrow circle of common-place observations, spreads over topics of political and historical interest. In addition to these advantages, one can already notice in Washington Southern manners and Southern hospitality. Nothing, indeed, is easier than to be introduced into the best society; a single letter of introduction answering all the purpose. Some of the *habitués* seem to make it their business to procure invitations to parties for strangers. “What party is

there to-night?" you hear a gentleman ask in the morning. — "It is Mrs. * * * 's. Are you invited?" — "I have not the honour of being introduced." — "Will you give me your card?" — "With pleasure;" and in an hour or so your invitation is left at the bar of your hotel. Many of these parties are indeed supperless, a circumstance much complained of by the dancers: but then the general tone is agreeable; the people having far less pretensions, and being much more natural in their manners, than either the New-Yorkers or the Philadelphians.

CHAPTER III.

The Library of Congress.—Conversation with several Members of Congress.—Practice of Public Speakers in Washington.—Mr. Van Buren's Method of parrying an Invective.—Discussion of General Jackson's Character.—Jackson and Wellington's similarity of Character.—Mr. Van Buren's Character.—Instability of American Institutions.—Insecurity of Property the Consequence of it.—Want of Enthusiasm in the Higher Classes.—Their Toad-eating in Europe.—Cooper's last Publication.—Vanity of boasting of the Natural Resources of the Country.—Thin-skinnedness of the Americans when attacked by European Critics.—Toad-eating to the People.—Necessity of establishing a Moral Quarantine for all Americans returning from Europe.—Americans ashamed of their Institutions.—Anecdote of a vulgar rich American and the Grand Duke of Tuscany.—Democratic Twaddles.—Advantages of a poor Capital.

* * * * *

“Ambition rends, and gaming gains a loss ;
 But making money, slowly first, then quicker,
 And adding still a little through each cross,
 (Which *will* come over things,) beats love or liquor,
 The gamester's counter, or the statesman's *dross*.
O gold ! I still prefer thee unto paper,
Which makes bank credit like a bark of vapour.’

BYRON'S *Don Juan*, Canto xii. 4.

BEING engaged in the evening, I spent the time from four till five in the afternoon in visiting

the library of Congress at the Capitol. I was introduced to the librarian by one of the members, and found him exceedingly obliging. The collection of books, manuscripts, newspapers, &c. is of course small, the number of works in any one department being probably insufficient to form a scholar: yet, for the entertainment of the members, and for such current and useful instruction as may be desirable for the purpose of reference, it is probably more than sufficient; and thus it well answers the purpose of its founders. After taking from one of the windows a fine view of the city, which looks more like a newly settled colony than the capital of a powerful country, I took a walk with two senators and a member up and down the macadamised road, called the Pennsylvania Avenue, which leads from the Capitol to the President's house; this being the fashionable promenade, business street, habitable quarter, and sum total of the whole American metropolis.

The two senators belonged to the democratic party, it being a rare case for a Whig ever to associate with a Democrat, and *vice versâ*; the member of the House belonged to the same class of politicians.

“What sort of speech was it Mr. * * * made

to-day?" demanded one of the senators of the member.

"Clever enough, I believe; but nobody listened to it. Mr. * * * speaks too much."

"And on all occasions, probably?"

"Precisely so."

"Then I do not wonder no one likes to hear him: it is the worst possible taste to be always up. A man has to be very careful with that. The older members do not like the younger ones to speak more on a question than is absolutely necessary. This privilege is entirely reserved for the veterans. A young man of talent must be cautious how he shows off; or they will make a dead set at him, and hunt him down. The best practice is to speak seldom, and only on great occasions."

"But you know," observed the member, "a man must give some signs of life, or he will not be re-elected. Most of our speeches are manufactured for home-consumption. We 'let fly' at them in the House, then print it, and then send a couple of thousand copies of it to our constituents. Uncle Sam, you know, pays the postage."†

† Every member, as well as every senator in Congress, possesses the "privilege of franking." "Uncle Sam" is the

"None of us has a right to complain about that," replied the senator: "speeches are made on both sides; each party possessing the same right, and making the same use of the privilege of franking."

"But then our party does not make near as long speeches as the Tories: it is only the higher classes of society will read a discourse filling more than seventeen columns in a newspaper."

"But how do they get people to listen to them?" demanded I.

"They don't," answered the member. "We just let him speak on, and employ our time in reading the newspapers, writing letters, conversing with one another, talking to some gentleman in the lobby, or in reading some interesting book. We always find some useful occupation: it is only the greenhorns listen to a long speech, with a view to catch an idea."

"Reading is sometimes practised with great success," observed the senator, "while a personal

familiar appellation of "United States," from the initials U. S. For the same reason, U. S. L. D. (the initials of "United States' Light Dragoons,") are translated into "Uncle Sam's lazy dogs."

attack is made upon a gentleman. Mr. Van Buren,* for instance, is in the habit of reading a novel as often as a Whig or Tory senator gets up to pour out his abuse against him. In this manner he is not only able to weather the storm without getting angry, but to show at the same time his contempt for the invective."

"That is a capital plan. I presume he occasionally looks over the book?" said the member with a laugh.

"Only when the abuse is very heavy; and then it is done with the most placid countenance, just to let his antagonist know how little he can shake him. It serves in the place of a reply, and keeps his party all the while in countenance."

"But what must a member or a senator do to obtain a hearing from his colleagues?" demanded I.

"Why, he must have friends, either political or personal, and he must know how to keep his audience in good humour; a task which is more difficult than you imagine."

The conversation then turned upon General Jackson, and the prospects of the opposition.

* The above notes were written in part during the administration of General Jackson, when Mr. Van Buren was President of the Senate.

“General Jackson,” said one of the senators, “understands the people of the United States twenty times better than his antagonists ; and, if his successor have but half the same tact, the Whigs may give up the hope of governing the country for the next half century.”

“You ought not to say ‘*tact*,’” interrupted the other senator, “for that alone will not do it ; he must have the same manners as our present President. General Jackson has a peculiar way of addressing himself to the feelings of every man with whom he comes in contact. His simple, unostentatious manners carry into every heart the conviction of his honesty ; while the firmness of his character inspires his friends with the hope of success. His motto always was, ‘*Never sacrifice a friend to an enemy ;*’ or, ‘*Make yourself strong with your friends, and you need not fear your foes.*’ These things, however, must be *born* with a man ; they must be spontaneous, and felt as such by the people, or they lose the best part of their effect. All the tact in the world will not answer the same purpose ; for, in exactly the same proportion as we perceive a man is prudent, we become cautious ourselves, — and then farewell to popularity !

“When the people give their suffrages to a man,

they never do so on a rigid examination of his political principles; for this task the labouring classes of any country neither have the time nor the disposition, and it is wholly needless to attempt to persuade them to a different course by a long and tedious argument. The large masses act in politics pretty much as they do in religion. Every doctrine is with them, more or less, a matter of *faith*; received, principally, on account of their trust in the apostle. If the latter fail to captivate their hearts, no reasoning in the world is capable of filling the vacancy: and the more natural and uncorrupt the people are, the less are they to be moved by abstract reasoning, whether the form of government be republican, monarchical, or despotic."

"Precisely so," ejaculated the member. "General Jackson is popular, just because he is General Jackson; so much so, that if a man were to say a word against him in the Western States, he would be '*knocked into eternal smash*.'"

"And this sort of popularity," continued the senator, "our Northern people consider as the mere consequence of the battle of New Orleans. The battle, and General Jackson's military character, had undoubtedly a great deal to do with it; but they were not of themselves sufficient to

elevate him to the Presidency. In a country in which so large a portion of the people consider the acquiring of a fortune the only rational object of pursuit,—in which so great and so exclusive an importance is attached to money, that, with a few solitary exceptions, it is the only means of arriving at personal distinction,—a character like Jackson's, so perfectly disinterested, and so entirely devoted to what he at least deemed the good of his country, could not but excite astonishment and admiration among the natural, and therefore more susceptible, people of the Western States. The appearance of General Jackson was a phenomenon, and would at the present time have been one in every country. He called himself 'the people's friend,' and gave proofs of his sincerity and firmness in *adhering* to his friends, and of his power to protect them. The people believed in General Jackson as much as the Turks in their prophet, and would have followed him wherever he chose to lead them. With this species of popularity it is in vain to contend; and it betrays little knowledge of the world, and the springs of human action, to believe those who possess it men of ordinary capacity.

“What the French call ‘*le génie du caractère*,’ which is the true talisman of popular favour, is

perhaps the highest talent with which mortals can be endowed. It is a pure gift of Heaven, and has accomplished the noblest deeds in history. When Napoleon reproached Voltaire with not having sufficiently appreciated the character of Mahomed, whom the French poet introduced in the drama of the same name as a mere impostor, he felt that none but a great mind could have conceived and executed what to ordinary men would have appeared absurd or chimerical; and that he who had the power to instil a lasting enthusiasm for a new cause into millions, and on that enthusiasm to establish an empire which has spread over half the world, must have been more than a mere charlatan, for he must have been possessed of a thorough knowledge of human character. This is a thing a man cannot acquire by study, if he do not possess it by intuition; and hence it can neither be defined nor understood by men not similarly gifted, who, applying their own scale to what is truly incommensurable, are always astonished at the success of those whom they were all their lives accustomed to look upon as second or third rate men.

“Have we not heard it objected to Napoleon, that he could not write an elegant epistle? Do the French not pity Shakspeare for having been

so little of a scholar, and so inelegant in his expressions? And yet wherein consisted the particular genius of these men, so entirely opposite to one another, if it was not, principally, in the perfect knowledge which truly intuitively they possessed of human character?

“In the same manner it has been said of General Jackson that he is incapable of writing a good English sentence, as if this were the standard by which to measure the capacity of a political chief, especially in America, where, out of a hundred senators and representatives, scarcely one has received what in Europe would be called a literary education. If classical learning were to constitute the scale by which to measure the talents of our statesmen, how far would they not rank behind the paltriest Prussian schoolmaster! General Jackson understood the people of the United States better than, perhaps, any President before him, and developed as much energy in his administration as any American statesman. I do not here speak as a partisan, nor do I wish to inquire whether all his measures were beneficial to the people; but they were, at least, all in unison with his political doctrines, and carried through with an iron consequence, notwithstanding the enormous opposition that wealth, and, in a great

degree, also talent, put in the way of their execution. And yet they call Jackson a second-rate man, because he is not a regular *speechifyer*, or has never published a long article in the newspapers !

“ To judge of a man like General Jackson, one must not analyze him after the manner of a chemist ; one must not separate his talents—his oratory—his style of composition—his generalship, &c. ; but take the *tout ensemble* of the man, and I venture to say there is not such another in the United States. It is useless to draw envious comparisons between him and Washington, Wellington, Napoleon, Jefferson, and so forth. Great men always wear the imprints of the times and circumstances which call their talents into action ; but history is sure to preserve the name of any man who has had the strength and genius to stamp his own character on the people over whose destinies he presided. General Jackson has many political enemies, and his political doctrines are perhaps only maintained—I will not say maintainable—by his own great personality. His successor in office may not be able to continue to make head against the opposition ;—another party may get into power, and introduce different doctrines into the administration of the country ;—

but the impulse which General Jackson has given to the democracy of America will always continue to be felt, and impel the government in a more or less popular direction."

"You are a great friend of General Jackson," said I, "from the animated defence you make of his character."

"I certainly am, sir," said he; "and I do not know a single man of our party that is not warmly attached to him. Not that I approve of all his political principles; but I like the man, and would rather see *him* President than any other."

"You have spoken my very heart," cried the other senator. "I like *Old Hickory*, because he is just the man for the people, and as immovable as a rock. One always knows where to find him."

"He is just the man our party wanted," rejoined the first senator, "in order to take the lead."

"And I like Old Ironhead," said the member, "because he is a man after my own sort. When he once says he is your friend, he *is* your friend; but once your enemy, then *look out for breakers*."

"And, what is more," interrupted the senator, "his hatred is of that pure Saxon kind

which is always coupled with moral horror ; and, for that reason, irreconcilable.”

“ And, what is better than all,” cried the member, chuckling, “ he has a good memory ; he never forgets a man who has rendered him a service, nor does he ever cease to remember an injury. The former is sure of being rewarded, the latter will with difficulty escape punishment. Mr. Adams, during his Presidency, was pusillanimous enough to endeavour to reconcile his enemies by all sorts of *douceurs* ; he appointed them to office, invited them to dinner, and distinguished them even before his friends. This conduct naturally alienated the latter ; while the former, perceiving his drift, did not think themselves bound to be grateful for his attentions. General Jackson introduced the doctrine of reward and punishment, and has ‘ *got along* ’ with it much better than his warmest friends anticipated. He appointed his friends to office, and dismissed his antagonists the moment they had taken an active part in politics. That principle, sir, is the proper one to go upon. The hope of reward, and the fear of punishment, govern men in politics and religion.”

“ You have expressed some apprehension,” said I, turning to the senator, “ that Mr. Van Buren,

whom I suppose you mean by the successor of General Jackson, might not be able to retain the reins of government long."

"If I did so," replied the senator, "it was not because Mr. Van Buren's principles are not fully as orthodox as Jackson's; but he will be called on the stage immediately after a great actor will have left it, in order to perform a part not *originally* intended for him. He may be a much greater statesman than General Jackson, and yet fail to satisfy the country. He may not be allowed to act out his own views, and unable to identify himself with the party as General Jackson did,—be reduced to an exceedingly precarious position. Besides, his means of reward, as my friend chooses to call them, will be limited; General Jackson having already distributed the best offices among his friends, and the power of creating new ones being with great reluctance granted by the people. As regards the power of punishment, Mr. Van Buren will be left entirely impotent; General Jackson having already cleared the vineyard of the most noxious weeds, and the dismissal from office of a person appointed by Jackson being sure of raising a hue and cry throughout the country."

"All that may be," observed the second

senator; "but Mr. Van Buren is a shrewd man."

"So he is; but all the shrewdness in the world will not change the disagreeable predicament in which he will be placed at the resignation of General Jackson. I am still afraid of the bank question."

"That is long ago knocked on the head."

"I wish it was; but I cannot bring myself to think so. The smallest commercial crisis—and our country is continually exposed to the largest ones—may revive the hopes of the opposition. It is the peculiar curse of our country never to come to a lasting conclusion on any political principle. What is law under one administration is abolished under another, and *vice versâ*, just as the one or the other party happens to command a majority of votes.

"What doctrine may now be considered as settled in the United States?—Not one; except that we are opposed to royalty—principally on account of its expenses. There is the system of internal improvements; have we come to a conclusion with regard to that?—No; the democratic party merely let it fall through, in order that the Whigs on obtaining power may take it up again. There is the American system with

the high tariff; how does that question stand?—The parties are precisely in the same position in which they were before the passing of the Compromise Bill in 1832-3; the North calling for a protective system, and the South determined to nullify.* And so it is with the question of a United States' bank, the merit of each principle being every year newly tested by the result of the elections. This state of things is far from being enviable, as it renders the possession of property every day more and more insecure.”

“Not only does it render property insecure,” rejoined the other senator, “but it undermines the stability of our institutions. Instead of adhering to the text of the *constitution*, our parties are led by different *policies*. There is the tariff policy; as if manufacturing, or getting rich by selling home-made cotton and broad-cloth, were the last end proposed by government. Then comes the national improvement policy; people must have large roads and canals in order to force trade into one or the other direction. They cannot wait until the wants of commerce shall have called them into existence; neither will they rely upon

* Mr. Calhoun declared in one of his recent speeches that he was neither for the administration, nor against it; but was merely an honest *nullifier*.

private enterprise for their execution : it must be done by the protecting guardianship of the government, and the whole country *en masse* must contribute to benefit particular States. Then comes the question of a national bank ; which has agitated the country before it was quite ushered into the world, and ever after. What great national question has occupied public attention more than the art, science, practice, custom, and expediency of making money ? It has employed all the wisdom, all the discretion, and all the energies of our statesmen ; clearly indicating what direction the republic of the nineteenth century would take, and wherein consists the greatness of our times.

“ All these questions have been so continually agitated that we have found no time for anything else ; and yet we wonder Europeans do not take a sufficient interest in the progress of our country. What have we done that is so very marvellous ? We have, thanks to the infinite resources of our country, built more railroads and canals than *they* have ; we have built and blown up more steamboats ; and we have, in proportion to our population, a larger mercantile navy than any other people. But what progress have we made in the arts and sciences, in literature, or in philosophy,

to entitle us to be ranked foremost in the scale of nations? There exists now an international literature among the civilized nations of the world. What share do we take in that? The present age is in labour to give birth to a new order of things, to a new era in history; what is America doing to aid the delivery?—she who has had so much to do with the conception, and who is now responsible to the world if the whole prove an abortion. Is not every such sympathy expressed by our people—I mean by the mass of our population—laughed to scorn by our ‘respectable’ citizens; and are not nine-tenths of all the Americans travelling in Europe a living parody of our republican institutions? Has not even Cooper written half a dozen books on England, Italy, France, &c. as if his main purpose were to teach his countrymen good manners, and to convince them that he is a competent instructor, having himself been admitted into the best society? Why, if the speeches of our fashionable gentlemen were published in Europe, if *their* estimation of our people and of our institutions were taken as a criterion of the justice and strength of our government, then the state of our country might, indeed, be held up *in terrorem* to every nation aspiring to liberty.

“What have we achieved to be proud of, if it be not our national charter? And is not this expounded by every party in a different manner? We do not even seem to know whether we shall really have a republican government, or whether our constitution shall be a mere mock-word, granting to the people in theory what a large and influential portion of our citizens endeavour to deny them in practice. As long as our institutions are looked upon as a mere experiment, not only by a certain class in Europe, but by the *élite* of our *own* people; as long as our fashionable toadies pour out their contempt for popular governments in the ante-chambers of princes and nobles; and as long as our enlightened press finds no better food for the patriotism of our people than to entertain them with the court fashions and the court etiquette of Europe,—we have no right to find fault with the literary and thinking portion of Europeans for not wondering at our progress, or not thinking us the very first nation in the world.

“To boast of the inexhaustible resources of the country God in his infinite mercy has granted us for the noblest experiment; to be proud of our getting rich, of our being well-fed and well-clothed; and to look down with a mixture of pity

and contempt on the millions which in less favoured climes are struggling against hunger and despotism,—proves a degree of vulgar egotism against which European writers have a right to use every weapon with which sarcasm and ridicule can furnish them.

“Instead of bawling like little children when we are hurt by some European critic, let us be sufficiently independent to go on fearlessly, and without reference to the fashions of other nations, in the developement of those maxims and principles which have led to the establishment of our government. Let every nation develope and improve that to which it is principally indebted for its existence and power, instead of continually borrowing from others, and introducing heterogeneous elements into the state, which can only weaken its cohesion. The peculiar genius of our people is their capacity for self-government. Let them follow the inspiration of that genius, and esteem themselves for their *real* worth, and they will have no need of fearing the sting of European sarcasm.”

“That’s it—that’s it exactly!” shouted the member. “Instead of going on ‘gloriously,’ ‘irresistibly,’ and ‘triumphantly,’ we stop all the time to pick up knowledge in Europe.”

“ There is enough knowledge to be picked up in Europe for you or me,” replied the senator with a significant look on the member ; “ but, when our people go to Europe, they pick up the weed, and overlook the wholesome plant. We have no discrimination in our choice ; and hence most of our countrymen, when they return home from abroad, arrive in a poisoned state, and immediately infect their neighbourhood. We ought to establish a sort of moral quarantine at the entrance of all our ports, where we ought to retain gentlemen and ladies returning from Europe, until they should have given symptoms of returning reason.”

“ That ’s exactly what *I* say,” cried the member. “ I wish somebody would make such a motion !”

“ Is it not strange,” continued the senator, “ that we, who are descended from the English, should resemble them so little in one respect ? The English carry their national customs and manners wherever they go ; whereas we, poor unfortunate Yankees ! with the sympathy of half the world in our favour, are absolutely ashamed of our own, and embarrassed when asked about the nature of our government.”

“ If any such there be, I wish I knew their

names," interrupted the member ; " they ought to be published."

" That would be ungentlemanly," retorted the senator, vexed with the interruption ; " you would surely not introduce a reign of terror !"

" I don't know about that," ejaculated the member ; " I am the man for the people, and, when any one insults them, my *dander* is up ; and then I don't know *what* I am doing."

The senator made no reply.

" There are men in Paris," continued he after a while, " who do more harm to their countrymen than all the books that have been written on America."

" And who are they ?" demanded the member eagerly.

" I shall not name them," said the senator ; " but they are some of our vulgar rich men, and the very worst hunters after nobility. One of them gives fine parties, and has by his extravagance acquired a sort of notoriety which he is mistaking for reputation. This man, who is much more proud of his intercourse with French noblemen than of his familiarity with his own countrymen, while at Florence actually refused to recognise one of our worthiest citizens whom he well knew, and whom the Grand Duke had received on several

occasions.—‘ Do you know Mr. * * * ?’ asked the Imperial Prince of Austria, the lion of Paris.—‘ I do not,’ replied the latter, somewhat abashed.—‘ He has certainly a very agreeable family,’ observed his Highness, by way of explaining his motive.—‘ That may be,’ answered the wealthy nothing; ‘ but he is a *merchant*, and I do not associate with these.’—‘ Indeed !’ remarked the Grand Duke naïvely, ‘ I was always told the merchants composed your best society !’”

“ And I dare say,” said the member, “ he would have been glad, while in America, to be ranked with the society of merchants.”

“ It is the character of every toad-eater,” observed the senator drily, “ that he ceases to recognise his friends the moment they can no longer be useful to him. There are toad-eaters in politics as well as in society. A man may be a toad-eater to the mob as well as to those above him ; and I do not know which of the two kinds is the worst. We have a set of political sycophants who fawn and cringe before every party that is in power, and who are always the first to desert them at the least *mauvais contretemps*. Our democracy has no greater enemies than those twaddles. They come over to the side of the people when they have no other alternative left,

and are the servants of the people just as long as the people have the power to retain them. They are democrats for a share in the loaves and fishes, and injure the party more than its most avowed opponents; just as treachery in your own ranks is worse than an attack from your enemy."

"But I should think people would soon find them out," observed the member.

"They may indeed very easily be detected," said the senator; "only the *people* find them out too late. One of the surest means of detecting them is to watch their animosity against harmless individuals, while they show the greatest delicacy for persons who have the power to injure them. These men are always ready to kill the fly that annoys them, but move quietly out of the way of the elephant; they never show their courage unless they are quite sure of opposing the weak, or, like Falstaff at the battle of Shrewsbury, merely stab the slain."

The conversation here began to flag; and, in a short time after, the honourable member, under pretext of having a pressing engagement with a friend, left us to enjoy the rest of our walk as best we might, without the advantage of his remarks. I seized this opportunity to ask the senator whether what I had heard of the poverty of

the city of Washington was true, and whether the town is really deserted during the summer ?

“ I am glad,” replied he, “ the people here are poor, and unable to give splendid entertainments. They would otherwise have the power of seducing senators and representatives with the display of fashion, and the numerous attractions and manœuvres of wealthy coteries. It is a fortunate circumstance that the legislative assemblies of the States of New York and Pennsylvania meet in comparatively small towns ; because not only the influence of the mob, which Jefferson dreaded, but also the aristocratic seductions of the higher classes, are capable of destroying the independence of legislators. From these evils we are happily exempted by the almost hopeless condition of the inhabitants of this place. Washington is, in this respect, like a German university, in which all the citizens make their living by the students and the professors, and on that account must do what the latter like, instead of holding out inducements for them to desert the path of duty. With the exception of half a dozen people of large estates, and particularly the very generous and hospitable General V—ss, all the parties, entertainments, balls, concerts, &c. are given by the *corps diplomatique*, or by the gentlemen holding

office, among whom some of the secretaries are particularly remarkable for their unostentatious civility to strangers. The company, again, is principally composed of persons connected with the government, of senators, members of the House, and foreign diplomatic agents ; so that the rich visitors from the Atlantic towns are incapable of making a sensation, and are only admitted on even terms."

"That 's a very flattering account of Washington society," said I, delighted with the prospect.

"If you are this evening invited to Mrs. * * * 's, you may probably have an opportunity of verifying all I have said. The meagre salaries of our public functionaries do not enable them to pamper their guests with hot suppers, as is the custom among the nabobs of New York ; but if agreeable and affable manners, and the *réunion* of the first talents of our country, can compensate you for a leg of a turkey or an oyster-pie, you will not regret staying a few days in the American metropolis."

So saying, he bid me good-b'ye ; begged me to make use of him in any manner I pleased, especially if I wished to be introduced to the President and Vice-president, or to any of his colleagues

on *his* side of the question. I thanked him cordially for his kindness ; and, intending to pay my respects to the President and Vice-president, told him frankly that I should be under great obligations to him for a personal introduction to General Jackson and Mr. Van Buren. This declaration had the desired effect, and it was agreed between us that he should call on me early on the morning of the following day in order to present me to the chief magistrate.

CHAPTER IV.

A fashionable young American at Gadsby's Hotel. — A Washington Party. — Description of the Parlour and the Refectory. — Apple Toddy. — Introduction to the Lady of the House and to a Fashionable Belle. — The young Lady's Literary Taste. — Mr. Wise. — Grand Distinction between American and English Conservatism. — American Literati. — A regular American Tory — his Rise and Progress. — Mr. Rives. — Mr. Preston. — Mr. Webster. — Pendant to the Old Bailey Speech quoted by Miss Martineau. — Calhoun's Remarks on the Money-mania of his Countrymen. — Webster's Answer and pathetic Conclusion — his giving into Poetry and sinking the Bathos. — John Quincy Adams. — Mr. Forsyth. — Anecdote of an American Anchorite. — A Mazurka danced by four Fashionable Ladies, a Polish Count, and three Members of the *Corps Diplomatique*.

“The greatest problem of the human race, to the solution of which men are forced by the peculiarity of their nature, is the establishment of a society for the maintenance of their rights.” — *Kant's Idea of a Universal History in a Cosmopolitical Sense*.

ON my return to the hotel I found the people at tea, which was served with beefsteaks, chops, ham, &c. and answered the purpose of a regular meal. It being too early for me to join them,

I quietly sneaked off to my room, or rather to the third part of a room, which was granted me by the kindness of the innkeeper; the other two-thirds, with the corresponding beds, &c. being occupied by a lieutenant in the navy, and a young man of fashion just returned from Europe, who, in proof of his foreign civilization, was constantly singing French songs without reference to melody or metre. One of these, which he usually sang in the morning, when owing to our late rising we got a cold breakfast, I yet remember had this singular *refrain* :—

“ Je suis content, je suis heureux ;
Tout homme doit l’être dans ces lieux.”

Being afraid lest the songster should enter the room, and dispute with me the use of the only looking-glass, I dressed as quickly as I could; and then went down to the reading-room, to drag out the time from six till eight with the newspapers. The appointed hour finally arrived, and with it the carriage I had previously engaged; and in less than three-quarters of an hour,—the house of Mrs. * * * being situated on the confines of the ideal town,—my “ negro driver ” halted before a small building with a wooden staircase in front, which looked as though it might be blown off by the first gale, or washed

away by the rain, considering that it was exposed to the unmitigated fury of both, and evidently placed there for no other purpose but to save room for the kitchen. The house, which was so uncommonly snug as to have but three windows in front, was brilliantly illumined by the aid of a single chandelier; and the door left open, in order that the invited guests might see their way up stairs into the parlour.

Arrived at the place, my coachman sprung off the box, opened the door of the carriage, and assisted me in alighting amidst a group of dark faces that were only rendered visible by the reflection from the whites of their eyes. I passed the review of the servants without loss of time, and scrambled up the wooden staircase in order to force my entrance into the parlour. This, however, was in vain; the gentlemen, who, much against their own inclination, were placed with their faces in the room and the more vulgar part of their composition outside, being unable to move forward, in order to admit the ingress of a new-comer, without interfering with the dancers. I tried to look *into* the room, in order to have at least a peep at the ladies; but, measuring but five feet ten, and the two gentlemen who guarded the entrance being probably Kentuckians, I could

not manage to look over their shoulders. I endeavoured to have a glance between their bodies, or between their shoulders and arms. Vain attempt! they were too compact to suffer a beam of light to go through them.

In despair I went up another pair of stairs, which led into a sort of refectory, to which the entrance, though difficult, was not impossible. The room was furnished in a befitting style of simplicity. There was no display of overgrown wealth; a few painted chairs and tables, a small ebony-framed looking-glass, and a few settees,—the bed having been previously ejected in order to make room for the company,—constituting the sum total of the *ameublement*. On a small side-table, neatly covered with a white table-cloth, were placed several large plates of sandwiches, bread and ham; and in the middle of the room stood a large basin, which at first I took for a Roman bathing-tub, placed there for the accommodation of such guests as came from a distance, but, on drawing near, discovered to be full of that exquisite beverage called “apple toddy,” which differs very little from Mr. Price’s gin punch at the Garrick, so much approved of by Mr. Theodore Hook. Indeed, I rather think the advantage, if any, on the side of the toddy, the

apples imparting to the gin a much more simple and delicate flavour than the Maraschino; and the thing would be better still if iced soda-water were added to the compound.

The gentlemen formed a very interesting group round this tub; and, perceiving a stranger step amongst them, immediately made room; while one of them, probably the president *pro tem.* seized a huge ladle, and immersing it first into the liquid, and holding it up again in triumph as high as he could, filled a more than double-sized glass to the very brim without spilling one drop of the liquid. This feat, which convinced me at once of his being an *habitué*, was scarcely accomplished, before, in the most graceful manner possible, he offered me the glass with the amicable greeting of—

“Every stranger is welcome in Washington!”

I of course pledged him in due politeness, and in less than five minutes felt perfectly acquainted with the whole company. I then made a second attempt at forcing an entrance into the ball-room, which, the Kentuckians being gone, and their places filled by two spindle-shanked heroes of New York, succeeded beyond my most sanguine expectations; admitting me not only

into the room, but into the presence of the lady of the house. Having been invited only through the kind intercession of a friend, without knowing mine hostess, and the custom of announcing by servants being not yet introduced into the United States, a gentleman who acted as usher immediately offered me his arm, and led me into the presence of an elderly lady, dressed rather in the English matron style than *à la française*, and whose countenance betokened a life passed in domestic peace and comfort.

The gentleman introduced me as *Monsieur DE * * **, much against my own inclination, and I could clearly perceive the consequence that little word *de* gave me; not so much with the lady of the house, as with a number of fashionable misses, strangers in the metropolis, “who had just come out that season.” I do not know whether *vanity* had something to do with it, but I thought I heard one of them ask whether I was a bachelor; which question being answered in the affirmative, I am quite sure I heard another one say, “Hem! I dare say he is as poor as that Polish Count * * *, who flirted with every young lady, and, when it came to the scratch, had hardly money enough to pay the parson.”

This common-sense remark of an American belle, which proved in a most satisfactory manner her preferring the useful to the agreeable, did not much affect me; neither did I ascribe it to the want of liberality towards strangers, having seen *native Americans* victimized in the same manner. I therefore pretended not to have heard the remark, and asked the gentleman who acted as master of the ceremonies to have the kindness to introduce me to the lady who, I thought, had inquired whether I was married.

I found her well-educated, *spirituelle*, — full of imagination. I even think she gave me to understand that she once wrote poetry — as an exercise at the boarding-school, and that she always had a secret attachment to men of letters. Among the various English writers, she was most in love with Scott, who completely transported her to the times of chivalry and knight-errantry; while her own countryman Cooper was to her “an object of perfect horror,” though she had no particular objection to his last works, “which contain a great deal of information about the state of society in Europe.” She “*longed* to see Europe; and was very much indebted to mamma for bringing her to Washington, where she could already have a foretaste of it.” On hearing this, her mother,

who stood near her, said that she was a child, and that I must not listen to her. Being really not disposed for a flirtation, and seeing the same senator with whom I had taken a walk in the afternoon enter the room, I was glad to find an opportunity of leaving my sentimental fair one to the care of her tender parent, who had instilled into her such delicate tastes.

When the senator saw that I was disengaging myself, he came up to me without ceremony, shook me by the hand, and asked me how I liked the party. I related to him my adventure in the upper room, which made him smile. “You may depend upon it,” “said he, “that if ever you meet with any of those gentlemen in the neighbourhood of his estate, you will not be able to get off with less than a month’s stay at his house,—such would be his hospitality, and the pleasure of meeting you again. I must now lead you round a little, in order to show you some of our most remarkable characters.

“That man there, with white hair and dark keen eyes, who so violently gesticulates, is Mr. Wise, a member from Virginia. He is a paragon of American speakers,—always up, always ready, always determined to speak, on every occasion, the modicum of two or three hours, were it but to

show his friends and constituents that he is ‘up and doing.’ He is a member of the Whig opposition; fighting against the government as against a hydra with many heads, all which *he* has to sever from the trunk. His contempt for the present administration knows neither bounds nor reason; and he is opposed to every one of its measures, to every member or senator that ever seconded or defended one of these, and to every man that ever voted for any such member or senator. He goes, in fact, ‘the whole hog t’other way,’ and, as such, is the very type of an American Whig. He carries his opposition almost to madness, though amongst his numerous speeches there are a good many clever ones.”

“I could never tell the object of your Whig party,” said I; “pray, what *are* its peculiar principles?”

“Our appellation of *Whigs* or *Conservatives*, and *Tories*, *Democrats*, or *Destructives*,” replied he, “must really puzzle the English. I would ask, what have *our* Conservatives to preserve? What our Destructives to destroy? Our Conservatives possess no exclusive rights, no privileges beyond those enjoyed by the people at large; their names are not associated with the history of the country; their ancestors, if they were known,

had nothing to do with establishing the government,—for the *mania* for aristocracy is least to be found among those families whose forefathers distinguished themselves in the revolutionary war; they hold no property which the first commercial crisis may not destroy; and hold, in fact, the very *reverse* position of the Conservatives in England. They do not endeavour to *preserve* what they possess, but strive to *acquire more*; they are not associated with the *past*, but entertain bright hopes of the *future*; they do not stand on the broad basis of the history of their own country, but seek for precedent in Europe. This, sir, is the character of *our* Conservatives, Whigs, or Aristocrats, who bear no more resemblance to the English Tories, than a poor man, who tries to become rich by shaving his neighbour, does to a millionaire who defends his own property.

“ You must not be misled by the idle declamations of those who incessantly talk of the levelling system, and its consequences on the people of this country. The levelling system commenced at the very settlement of the country, and was most active during the revolution. It was then that the Conservatives, with some show of logic, might have declaimed against the levelling principle; not now. There are some who will gravely tell

you that the most eminent American statesmen, during the revolution and immediately after, were Conservatives, or moderate Tories; but what does this prove, if it be true? Simply, that a great number of those whom an overruling Providence used as instruments in bestowing liberty and happiness on our people, did not understand what they were doing: which, after all, does not make so very much against them; there being at all times, and in all countries, but few politicians capable of foreseeing the ultimate result of an innovation. And what, I would ask, have nine-tenths of these Tories to lose by this levelling system, that makes them so tenacious of their doctrines? Where is the elevation from which they are afraid to descend? What noble principles which they cherish, will thereby be trodden in the dust? What protection which they give to arts and sciences, will thereby suffer? Echo must answer, 'What?'—Daniel Webster, the gentleman there with the hawk-eyes, told us that the war between the democrats and the aristocracy is a war of the poor against the rich; and I am inclined to think he is half right,—as far, namely, as concerns his own party. But if wealth form the only distinction, the only claim to supremacy in our country, the sooner we get rid of its influence the better.

It is the most degrading of all, and must be equally spurned by the labourer and the man of genius."

"But a great number of your literary men belong likewise to the opposition."

"Pray, don't talk to me of our literary men! We have as yet, for the most part, but literary imitators, who follow the beaten track of the English or French; and the organization of our society is admirably calculated to retain them in this state of imbecility. It is the want of nationality, the absence of generous and expanded feelings, which are crushed by the vulgar inordinate desire after money, and the little love which our upper classes in general bear to the institutions of our country, which are the cause of our poets singing the praise of the lark and the nightingale, with whose melodious strains they are only acquainted through the medium of some English annual. What is there in our country to inspire poetic sentiments, if it be not the love of liberty and of nature, the great sources of all poetry?"

"We are told that our political principles are bad, because they do not meet with the approbation of some two or three score of vain scribblers calling themselves *literati*, but being in fact

pettifogging lawyers, that have not wit enough to make a living by their profession. Now, in order to prove such an assertion to be correct, it would first be necessary to show that these representatives of the wisdom, intelligence, and patriotism of the country are capable of forming a correct judgment of the position and wants of our people; and, secondly, that they are capable of forming an *independent* judgment. When our *litterati* shall be known otherwise than by writing for the newspapers, or occasionally for an album, I shall believe the first; when I shall see a paper without advertisements, I shall trust in the second.

“We talk of an independent press, and our editors are more easily bought and sold than any writer in France! They are, indeed, not bought by so much money down, simply because there is none to give it them; but by contributions of twenty-five dollars a-piece for *annual advertisements*, paid at the end of the year,—if the subscriber does not fail in the mean time. Our *litterati* want to make a living with their pen, and are in this respect just like other tradespeople.

“There,” said he, pointing to a young man dressed in the latest London fashion, “is a gen-

tleman, the son of a respectable merchant in New York, who may serve as an illustration of what *we* mean by a Tory. He is just turned twenty-one, and has already been in France, England, and Italy. His father is rich ; that is, he associates with fashionable people, keeps a carriage, and will, if he do not meet with great reverses, leave to his six children from fifteen to twenty thousand dollars a head. This modicum the young man will have to improve, or he will die a beggar ; so that, if he does not marry a rich woman, he will be unavoidably condemned to personal labour and exertion. Yet this young man is *an aristocrat* ! His father, knowing his inability to provide for him in such a manner as to render him independent, thought fit to give him a *practical* rather than a literary education. The young man accordingly *learned* reading, writing, and spelling ; writes a tolerably fair hand, and has studied mathematics—as far as the rule of three ! When he had acquired so much of a practical education, he was sent to Europe to *perfect* himself.

“ He first went to England, where he saw all the great actors and actresses, went up St. Paul’s to take a view of the city of London, made the

round of the principal gambling-houses and other public establishments worth the attention of a traveller, dined with every gentleman to whom he brought a letter of introduction, and then wrote home, that, being perfectly acquainted with English society, he was now desirous of seeing France. His father accordingly sent the money, and the young man set out in a stage-coach from London to Dover. From Dover to Boulogne he went in a steamer; and at Boulogne he took the *malleposte* for Paris, making observations all the way on the manners of the French people.

“Arrived in Paris, his first care was to secure comfortable lodgings; then he delivered his letter of introduction, which was a letter of credit on Messrs. * * * and Co.; then dined with his banker; after which he dined again at a *restaurant*’s, and then set out to prepare for his daily avocation, which consisted in strolling from his lodgings in the Rue Rivoli, through the Rue St. Honoré, to the Palais Royal; from the Palais Royal, through the Rue Vivienne, to the Place de la Bourse; thence through the Passage du Panorama to the Boulevards; and over the Boulevards, through the Rue de la Paix and the Place Vendôme, into the garden of the Tuileries,

which, together with the principal theatres and other places of amusement, contained his circle of acquaintance in the French metropolis.

“Society in France being a little easier of access than in England, he obtained, by dint of perseverance,—one of our cardinal virtues,—access to one or two respectable families, and left his card with our minister in order to be presented at court. Whether he was actually admitted into ‘the presence of royalty,’ after which his heart panted ever since he was a boy, I know not; but I rather think he *was*, since, immediately on his return, he cut most of his old friends and acquaintances, and was, in fact, quite another man.

“The time of his embarkation at Havre being fixed upon, he employed the remaining six or seven weeks to see Italy; not forgetting to buy in Milan some *black lace* for his sister, in Genoa some *velvet* for his mother, and in Rome one or two pieces of *mosaïque*, in order to show his taste in the fine arts. The reason he did not purchase a *hat* at Leghorn was, that he did not know how to dispose of it in his portmanteau. I forgot to say, that, during all the time the young gentleman was in Europe ‘improving himself,’ he wrote home ‘the most touching letters,’ which were

shown to all the acquaintance of the family ; and, it being thought a pity that such talents should remain hidden under a bushel, and not enlighten other Americans that did not enjoy the same advantages, some of them actually appeared in the papers, superscribed ‘ *Correspondence of an American Gentleman now travelling in Europe.*’ What was particularly remarkable in his correspondence was the great number of Gallicisms ; showing his acquaintance with a foreign idiom, which he had already mastered to such a degree as to forget his own language. At last he came back from his tour, and has ever since been a lion in our fashionable society. Such, sir, is the usual type of our aristocrats, who are constantly railing against the levelling system, which would confound them with the industrious mechanic, the honest farmer, and the enterprising and thriving backwoodsman. But we have already lost too much time with a *puppy* ; I must now show you some of our *men*.

“ That gentleman there, whose animated conversation has brought together a circle of hearers, is Mr. Rives, senator from Virginia. He is one of the best specimens of our Southern gentlemen, uniting great vigour of mind, and the eye of a statesman, with those agreeable and affable man-

ners which throw off restraint without diminishing respect; a gift which nature seldom bestows on those born under more Northern latitudes. He will be a prominent candidate for the Vice-presidency, and a great support to the democratic party. Mr. Rives is an agreeable speaker, clear and precise in his arguments, and an enemy to the rhetorical or flowery style. He has no notion of sinking the bathos, or of shaking the Senate with the thunder of his voice.

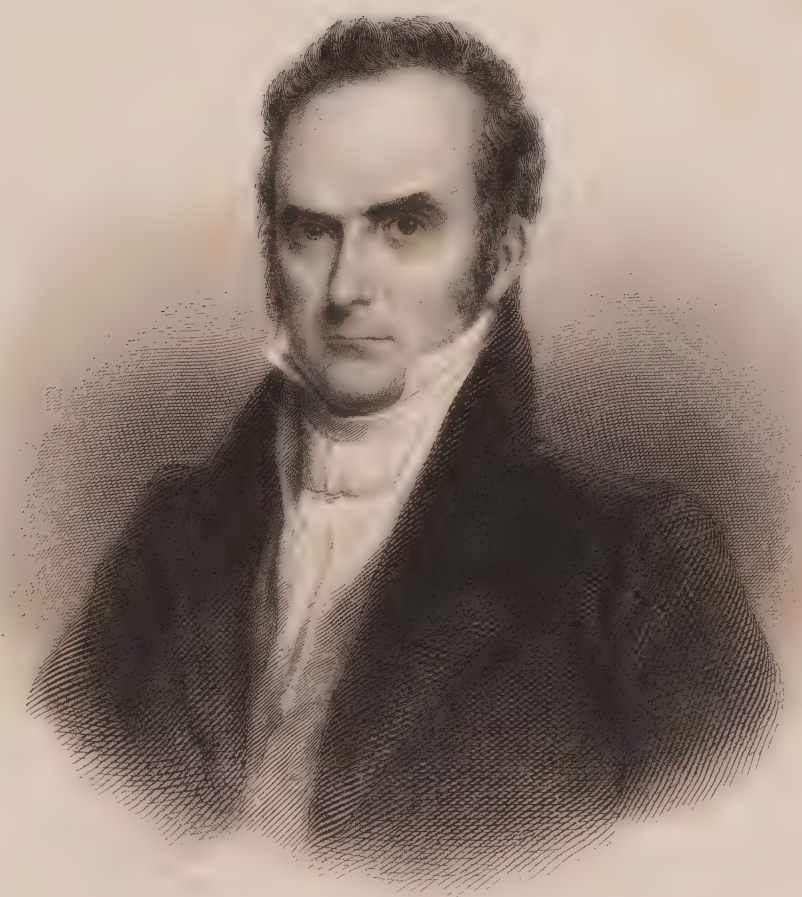
“Next to him stands a gentleman with a red wig and a laughing countenance; his eyes sparkle, though he has not yet had any champaign, and the spirits confined within his brain seem to celebrate one continual Lord Mayor’s day. This is Mr. Preston, senator from South Carolina. What a pity it is he is on the side of the opposition! He is full of fun; mixes up repartee, sarcasm, irony, and *persiflage* in one continual strain of humorous eloquence; and is, in fact, the prince of wags in Congress. His manners, of course, are those of a gentleman,—which indeed he cannot help, being a South-Carolinian; and his wit, though it sometimes touches to the quick, is accompanied by so much good-nature that it is impossible to be angry with him. These qualities, of course, do not make him a *leader*, but

rather the cavalry of the opposition ; and his spirited attacks sometimes make greater havoc than the artillery of Clay or Webster.

“ Mr. Webster you know already. He sits at yon table, playing at whist. This is trifling away his time, for he is the last man to spend his hours in innocent amusements. Mr. Webster is, according to *my* opinion, a gentleman without imagination or extensive reading ; but of immense natural talents, and severe application to his profession. He is considered one of the best, and there are those who consider him *the* best, constitutional lawyer ; and, certes, his judgment, discrimination, and logic are not surpassed by any member or senator in Congress. Yet, with all these qualities, he is better calculated for a debater than for a leader ; his mind being more of that analytic order which succeeds in dissecting and destroying, than of that synthetic character which combines simple elements to an harmonious whole. The latter requires a creative genius, and a certain intuitive knowledge of things ; whereas the process of dissection presupposes but a careful examination of facts, and the application of sound logic.

“ To understand where Mr. Webster’s talents lie, it is only necessary to study his parliament-

ary tactics, and to read his speeches. He never rises from his seat, except to repel an attack, or to take advantage of an overture given by one of his enemies. When an important question—of which he is hardly ever the originator—is proposed, his practice is to wait until every one has given his opinion; he then compares them, dissects them, analyses them, and (wonderful!) pronounces upon them like a judge after hearing the argument of each counsel. Every flaw in the reasoning, in the expression,—every logical imperfection is sure to be detected; and his speech, which in truth is a critical abstract of all the speeches delivered in Congress, passes then, with his friends at least, for an *original* production. But I would ask, what particular measure has he originated that produced either good or evil to the country? The tariff?—That was Mr. Calhoun's measure. Internal improvements, or a bank?—That honour (!) belongs to Henry Clay. When, at the session of Congress in 1832-3, the country was threatened with civil war, was it *he* that averted the calamity by the proposition of a measure calculated to satisfy all parties?—No; this honour belongs again to Henry Clay. What, then, I ask, has he done that is so wonderful?—He is a great constitutional lawyer! That may be; but he



JOHN W. FOSTER

has not yet delivered his ideas in a scientific form, and the commentaries of Mr. Justice Story will perhaps outlive the fame of Daniel Webster.

“Mr. Webster’s great tact in repelling an enemy consists in personal satire and irony. Thus he succeeded against Mr. Haines, and against a number of minor opponents, who all went to swell his renown. His speeches are clear and argumentative; but, while they occupy your understanding, they leave you cold and cheerless. He cannot excite your imagination; he cannot touch your feelings; and he does not stimulate your enthusiasm. Neither is he capable of supplying this deficiency by his personality; for, though respected and admired throughout the country, he is not beloved,—no, not even by his own partisans. Mr. Webster knows the laws of his country; but he is less acquainted with the men that are to be governed by them, and possesses none of those conciliating and engaging qualities which insure personal popularity. This accounts for his position in Congress, where, notwithstanding the powerful aid he lends to the opposition, he stands alone—*the terrible senator from Massachusetts*.

“Neither is Mr. Webster as a speaker entirely without faults. He sometimes tries to sink the

bathos by being flowery and rhetorical; and he seems to labour under the singular impression that a public speaker must commence and leave off with a flourish, and on this account violates his imagination with the composition of regular beginnings and ends, which are but too frequently wholly irrelevant to the text of his discourses. He had, in this respect, better follow the example of certain landscape painters, who, being perfectly equal to the *inanimate*, leave the *figures* to be done by somebody else."

N. B. — It is now three years since I noted down the conversation of the democratic senator. I have since heard so much of Daniel Webster,—European writers, and especially Miss Martineau,* having actually made his apotheosis,—that, as a *pendant* to the Old Bailey speech recorded in her

* Miss Martineau, I understood of my American friends, was, like many English reformers, a great enthusiast for democracy in the abstract; only that in her private intercourse she preferred the society of distinguished persons belonging to the opposite coterie. This probably accounts for her partiality with regard to Daniel Webster and Henry Clay, and her antipathy to the administration. The Quarterly Review, in an excellent article on that useful and instructive work of Mr. Walker, entitled "The Original," ascribes to the influence of the generous and brilliant hospitality of the noble Lords Lansdowne, Holland, Sefton,—and the clever writer might have

last work on America, I cannot refrain here from laying before the British reader some elegant extracts from one of his speeches (called the *Great Speech*), in reply to the remarks of John C. Calhoun, delivered in the Senate on the 12th of March 1838. This speech, one of the most elaborate of which he was ever delivered, fills, in the "New York American," seventeen and a quarter columns, and was intended to demolish his antagonist. It is on that account full of personal attacks, occasionally interspersed with a modest praise of himself.

Mr. Calhoun had been defending an independent Treasury, such as exists, and has always existed, in every country, whether the Government was monarchical or republican; while Mr. Webster, the advocate of a union between the Government and the Bank, tried to ridicule the

added his Grace the Duke of Devonshire,—“a magic power, which, in the intoxication of the moment, throws many an author off his guard, until he finds or thinks himself irrecoverably committed, and, suppressing any lurking inclination towards Toryism, becomes deeply and definitely a Whig.” The administration party in America are unfortunately not much in the habit of entertaining people; but if the number of dishes—no matter how cooked—constituting an American dinner can be put into the scale against the rank, beauty, wit, eloquence, accomplishment, and agreeableness which congregate at the noble houses just named, an *American Whig* dinner, too, is not without its attraction.

idea; endeavouring to show that his adversary had been *previously* wrong on a question relating to the *tariff*. Mr. Calhoun, in his opening remarks, pointed to the evils of the irresponsible American banking system; to its “self-sustaining principle, which poised and impelled the system, self-balanced in the midst of the heavens like some celestial body, with scarcely a perceptible deviation from its path from the concussion it had received;” and at last took the following philosophic ground:—

“But its most fatal effects (the effects of the American banking system) originate in its bearing on the moral and intellectual developement of the community. The great principles of demand and supply govern the moral and intellectual world no less than the business and commercial. If a community be so organised as to cause a demand for high mental attainments, they are sure to be developed. If its honours and rewards are allotted to pursuits that require their developement by creating a demand for intelligence, knowledge, wisdom, justice, firmness, courage, patriotism, and the like, they are sure to be produced. But if allotted to pursuits that require inferior qualities, the higher are sure to decay and perish. I object to the banking

system, because it allots the honours and rewards of the community in a very undue proportion to a pursuit the least of all others favourable to the developement of the higher mental qualities, intellectual or moral,—to the decay of the learned professions, and the more noble pursuits of science, literature, philosophy, and statesmanship, and the great and more useful pursuits of business and industry. With the vast increase of its profits and influence it is gradually concentrating in itself most of the prizes of life,—wealth, honour, and influence,—to the great disparagement and degradation of all the liberal, useful, and generous pursuits of society. The rising generation cannot but feel its deadening influence. The youth who crowd our colleges, and behold the road to honour and distinction terminating in a banking-house, will feel the spirit of emulation decay within them, and will no longer be pressed forward by generous ardour to mount up the rugged steep of science as the road to honour and distinction, when, perhaps, the highest point they could attain in what was once the most honourable and influential of learned professions would be the place of attorney to a bank.”

The force and truth of these remarks are amply illustrated by the actual composition of

American society, and would be equally felt in England, if, with a system of banking similar to that now in use in the United States, the people were at any time to be *deprived* (I use that word on purpose) of the influence of the nobility and clergy. It is the absence of high dignitaries, and of men placed by their birth and education above the level of ordinary men, which renders the presence of a moneyed aristocracy in the United States truly odious and degrading; and forces every man of sound sense, who is capable of understanding the true position of the country by comparing it to that of others, naturally over to the democratic party. In proportion as science and literature will be cultivated in America, democracy will become more and more powerful; for it is only vulgar and inferior minds Whiggism can purchase with money.

To the short and pithy speech of Mr. Calhoun, then, Mr. Webster made, as I said before, a seventeen and a quarter column answer. This I surely have no intention of inflicting upon the innocent reader;* but, in order to verify the criticism of the democratic senator, I shall quote a few of those passages in which Mr. Webster

* One of the arguments of Mr. Webster has already been mentioned in another chapter.

gives into the poetical,—that is, those passages in which his imagination seems to be sufficiently excited to *quote* poetry, exhibiting his taste in the selection,—and the grand *finale*, which will demonstrate his art of sinking the bathos.

At the head of the ninth column, after expatiating at some length *on the inconvenience* of counting money, which would ensue in case of a Treasury, he says,

“ But this is not all : once a quarter the naval officer is to count the collector’s money, and the register in the land-office is to count the receiver’s money. And, moreover, sir ! every now and then the secretary of the Treasury is to authorize unexpected and impromptu countings in his discretion, and just to satisfy his own mind. What a money-counting, tinkling, jingling, generation we shall be ! All the money-changers in Solomon’s temple will be as nothing to us. Our sound *will go forth into all lands*. We shall be like the king in the ditty of the nursery,

‘ There sat the king a-counting of his money.’ ”

What mighty reasons these for not having a Treasury ! And what glorious quotation of poetry ! What a beautiful association of ideas ! To think of the nursery ditty in the Senate of

the United States ! How well Mr. Webster remembers the days of his innocence ! and what a talent he must have had, even as a boy, for finance, to remember just the verse which relates to the “king *a*-counting of his money !”

The next quotation of poetry occurs on the fourteenth column, where Mr. Webster speaks of the issue of Treasury notes, which, as the orator assures us, might be given out by the Government so as to *flood the country*.*

“And now I pray you to consider, Mr. President,” says Mr. Webster, “what an admirable contrivance this would be to secure that economy in the expenses of Government which the gentleman has so much at heart. Relaxed from all necessity of taxation, and from the consequent responsibility to the people, — (this is a wilful misrepresentation of the fact,) — not called upon to regard at all the amount of annual income, — having an authority to ‘cause Treasury notes to be issued, whenever it pleases,

* Mr. Webster does not enter on that part of Mr. Calhoun’s speech in which the latter observes, that the Government, issuing Treasury notes only to the amount of the anticipated revenue, and for the necessary expenses of the State, could not abuse its privilege half so much as the United States’ Bank, dependent as the latter is on commercial fluctuations, and on the peculiar system of credit established in America.

‘ In multitudes, like which the *populous* North
Poured never from her *frozen* loins to pass
Rhine or the Danau,’—

what admirable restraint would be on Government !” &c.

Now mark how well those three lines of blank verse are brought in ! What a beautiful simile, to compare the issue of Treasury notes to the *populous* North *pouring* from her *frozen* loins hordes of barbarians to cross the Rhine or the *Danau* ! How applicable ! Just the thing for America ! What a terrible sensation those children of the North would make among the Yankees, just as they are crossing the Rhine or the Danube !

But the conclusion of Mr. Webster’s speech is a perfect *chef d’œuvre*. He there apostrophises Calhoun in the following manner :—

“ Let him go ! I remain ! I remain where I ever have been, and ever mean to be. Here, standing on the platform of the General Constitution,—a platform broad enough and firm enough to uphold *every* interest of the *whole* country,—I shall still be found !”

The words, “ Let him go ! I remain !” produce a sort of dramatic effect ; and are, I believe, a happy imitation of those ancient soliloquies

which commence thus: "*He is gone, and I am alone.*" And then how natural that the platform of the General Constitution, which is broad enough "to uphold *every* interest of the *whole* country," should also support *him*! Nothing could be more *à propos*.

"Intrusted," continues Mr. Webster, "with some part in the administration of that constitution, I intend to act in its spirit, and in the spirit of those who framed it. Yes, sir; I would act as if our fathers who formed it for us, and who bequeathed it to us, were looking on us,—as if I would see their venerable forms bending down to behold us from the abodes above! I would act too, sir, as if that long line of posterity were also viewing us, whose eye is hereafter to scrutinise our conduct."

What a thorough view and review that is! and what can be more pathetic than to see the fathers of the constitution first *looking* upon them, and then bending down their venerable forms to *behold* them!

Mr. Webster continues the same beautiful figure still farther.

"Standing thus as in the full gaze of our *ancestors* and our *posterity*, having received this inheritance from the former to be transmitted to

the latter, and feeling that, if I am born for any good in my day and generation, it is for the good of the whole country, (what a modest way this of recommending himself to the Presidency !) no local policy or local feelings, no temporary impulse shall induce me to yield my *foothold* (!) on the constitution and the Union. I move off under no banner not known to the whole American people, and to their constitution and laws. No, sir; these walls, these columns,

‘ fly
From their firm base as soon as I.’ ”

This is the third and last quotation of poetry, and a direct challenge of the nullifier, *defeated by General Jackson*. The selection is beautiful ! Mr. Webster's bravery needs no comment !

Then comes the real *last end* of the speech, — a perfect *bijou* of rhetorical amplification.

“ I came into public life, sir, *in the service* of the United States.” (Mr. Webster probably means *to serve* the United States.) “ On that broad *altar* my earliest and all my public vows have been made. I propose to serve no other *master*. So far as depends on any agency of mine, they shall continue United States, united in interest and affection, united in every thing in regard to

which the constitution has decreed their union ; united in war, for the common defence, the common *renown*, and the common glory ; and *united, compacted, knit firmly together* in peace, for the common prosperity and happiness of ourselves and our children."

Who does not here remember the wholesome piece of advice Napoleon gave to his brother Lucien when the latter had sent him a proclamation intended for the public ? " I have read the proclamation," observed Napoleon ; " it is good for nothing. There are too many words and too few ideas in it. You struggle after pathos. This is not the way to speak to the people. They possess more tact and judgment than you are aware of. Your *prose* will do more harm than good."

I am not disposed to undervalue Mr. Webster's talent as a judge and critic, — except as regards poetry and the arts. The bench is the proper place for him ; but as a statesman, or party leader, he can only succeed by the blunders of his antagonists.

The next gentleman to whom my democratic friend directed my attention was a short stout figure, with a bald head, and a cold, displeasing,

repulsive countenance, which, notwithstanding, beamed with an almost supernatural intelligence. "This is Mr. John Quincy Adams," observed my friend, "formerly President of the United States, and now a member of Congress. Next to General Jackson, he is perhaps the most remarkable man in the country, though he is his perfect antipode. If anything shows the superiority of character over abstract knowledge, it is the triumph of the honest, straightforward soldier over this hair-splitter. Were there yet twenty Jacksons in the country, they would yet twenty times succeed against such a man. This is a law of nature.

"Mr. Adams, if you consider his acquirements, is probably the best informed man in America, though his knowledge is somewhat rhapsodical, like his character. He has the most astonishing memory, and possesses great conversational powers. Yet, with all these eminent qualities, he has not one true friend! With almost universal talent, and, I might add, universal application, he possesses no genius, no great personality, like Jackson, born to wield the destinies of a country. He is full of information, understands most perfectly the routine of business, reads everything, examines everything, and remembers everything; and yet, when he comes to act, is sure of committing some

blunder which will expose him and his friends. He is, in fact, a living illustration of Voltaire's motto :

*' Nous tromper dans nos entreprises,
C'est à quoi nous sommes sujets ;
Le matin je fais des projets,
Et le long du jour des sottises.'*

The reason is, he knows Europe better than he does America ;—he is a stranger in his own country. He fights his battles on paper ; calculating the number of men, their position, and the kind of arms, but making no allowance for their moral character. Many of his plans are well conceived, but all are badly executed ; and he has the weakness of most bad generals, to account for his lost battles by the faults of his inferior officers.

“ The *gaucheries* which distinguish his political life also mark his private intercourse ; he talks better than any man in the United States, and yet is sure to be embarrassed when addressed, unless previously prepared for it. This want of social talent I have frequently noticed among the most eminent men of New England, and it accounts for their little popularity. Mr. Adams belongs, of course, to the opposition ; but, like the independent Yankee militia-man, fights his battles ‘ *on*

his own book.’* He will not suffer any one near him, and attacks indiscriminately friend or foe that opposes his progress. Of late, few of his own party have dared to come within his reach; for, though his political principles are somewhat *rococo*, his wit and sarcasm are as unimpaired as ever, and his capacity to scratch those who tread upon his toe as good as in the best days of his manhood.

Mr. Adams’s peculiar manners have, with the exception of too much panegyric, been well described in an article entitled “Glances at Congress,” inserted in the first number of the *United States’ Magazine and Democratic Review*, published at Washington. “Our attention,” says the reporter who furnished the article, “is now attracted to a ray of light that glitters on the apex of a bald and noble head, ‘located’ on the left of the House, in the neighbourhood of the Speaker’s chair. It proceeds from that wonderful man, who in his person combines the agitator, philosopher, poet, statesman, critic, and orator,—John Quincy Adams. Who that has seen him sitting beneath the cupola of the hall, with the

* This was the answer of a citizen, who, being called upon to join a company during the last war, wished to express his determination to fight independently, *on his own account*.

rays of light gathering and glancing about his singularly polished head, but has likened him to one of the luminaries of the age, shining and glittering in the political firmament of the Union. There he sits hour after hour, day after day, with untiring patience; never absent from his seat, never voting for an adjournment, vigilant as the most jealous member of the House; his ear always on the alert, himself always prepared to go at once into the profoundest question of state, to the minutest point of order. What must be his thoughts as he ponders on the past, in which he has played a part so conspicuous! We look at him, and mark his cold and tearful eye, his stern and abstracted gaze, and conjure up phantoms of other scenes. We see him amid his festive and splendid halls ten years back, standing stiff and awkward, and shaking a tall, military-looking man by the hand, in whose honour the gala was given, to commemorate the most splendid of America's victories. We see him again, years afterwards, the bitter foe of that same military chieftain, and the competitor with him for the highest gift of a free people. We look upon a more than king (!?), who has filled every department of honour in his native land, still at his post; he who was the President of millions, now

the representative of forty odd thousand, quarrelling about trifles or advocating high principles. To-day growling and sneering at the House, with an abolition petition in his trembling hand ; and anon lording it over the passions, and lashing the members into the wildest state of enthusiasm by his indignant and emphatic eloquence. Alone, unspoken to, unconsulted, never consulting with others, he sits apart, wrapped in his reveries ; and, with his finger resting on his nose, he permits his mind to move like a gigantic pendulum, stirring up the hours of the past and disturbing those of the hidden future. Or probably he is writing,—his almost perpetual employment ;—but what ?—who can guess ?—perhaps some poetry in a young girl's album ! He looks enfeebled, but yet he is never tired ; worn out, but ever ready for combat ; melancholy, but let a witty thing fall from any member, and that old man's face is wreathed in smiles. He appears passive, but woe to the unfortunate member that hazards an arrow at him ; the eagle is not swifter in his flight than Mr. Adams ; with his agitated finger quivering in sarcastic gesticulation, he seizes upon his foe ; and, amid the amusement of the House, rarely fails to take a signal vengeance.

“ His mode of speaking is peculiar. He rises

abruptly, his face reddens, and, in a moment throwing himself into the attitude of a veteran gladiator, he prepares for the attack. Then he becomes full of gesticulation, his body sways to and fro, self-command seems lost; his head is bent forward in his earnestness till it sometimes nearly touches the desk; his voice frequently breaks, but he pursues his object throughout its bearings. Nothing daunts him; the House may ring with the cries of 'Order, order!'—unmoved, contemptuous, he stands amid the tempest, and, like an oak that knows his gnarled and knotted strength, stretches his arms forth, and defies the blast."

Leaning against the wall, his hands folded on his back, a contemplative spectator of the busy scene before him, stood a gentleman with venerable white hair, and a pale placid countenance, which at once bespoke reserve and affability, firmness of purpose and urbanity, in an extraordinary degree. This, as my friend acquainted me, was Mr. Forsyth, formerly senator from Georgia, but now Secretary of State. He was one of the most strenuous defenders of General Jackson's policy at a time when the latter had a large majority against him in the Senate, and was shortly after

called into the cabinet. There he distinguished himself by his tact, moderation, and sound statesmanlike policy. The part he took in the recent difficulties with France is known, though it is believed he principally acted under General Jackson's direction.

Mr. Forsyth is one of those few members of the cabinet who have escaped the ferocious attacks of the opposition. Though a strong partisan of democracy, neither his private nor his public life furnished a text for the abuses of party. Some ignorant and uncultivated persons have *accused* (!) him of too great a devotion to the ladies; but this reproach, so far from injuring him in the estimation of sensible persons, only goes to elevate his character as a man.

It is high time for the Americans to leave off the barbarous and ridiculous notion that a man, in order to be a statesman, a lawyer, an orator, or a man of business, must necessarily be a bore in society. I was once present when an American, who was in the habit of delivering gratuitous lectures on morality, was asked by a Frenchman what sort of impression the sight of a beautiful and lovely woman made upon him? "Precisely the same as that of a fine *horse*," replied he, by way of showing the utter subjection in which he

kept his passions.—“ *Dieu merci !*” cried the Frenchman ; “ I vill not invite you to see my darters.” Nothing, certainly, marks the irredeemable vulgarity of a person more strongly than his indifference to beauty and accomplishment.

“ There are yet three gentlemen,” continued my friend, “ whom I would gladly show you, as amongst those who have the greatest influence on the destinies of our country ; but unfortunately they are not here, and, with the exception of Mr. Van Buren, who is one of them, are seldom seen at parties. To-morrow, however, after our call on General Jackson, I shall introduce you to them personally. At present you must excuse me ; I have to see some of my colleagues in order to prepare them for a question which I know will to-morrow come up in the Senate. The opposition want to steal a march upon us ; but I am determined they shall find us prepared.”

Shortly after the senator disappeared, and with him a number of his colleagues. Scarcely one member remained after twelve, though the dance continued till half-past two. On this occasion I saw the first *mazurka* danced in the United States ; four fashionable ladies consenting to be partners to three Russian gentlemen and a Polish count, who was something of a lion in Washington.

The three Russians were none other than the amiable and witty Baron K—r, the Russian minister ; the clever and kind-hearted Mr. K—r, the secretary of legation ; and Mr. G—, the *attaché*. The partners could not have been better selected : and, though I could observe not a few sneers in the countenances of the elderly portion of the fair, the younger was evidently delighted ; and, as I understood afterwards, practised the steps and the “ turn-about ” more than a week, to the exclusion of everything else. I remained until two ; at which time I took another glass of apple-toddy, which enabled me to return home without stopping on the way at the “ Epicure House.”

CHAPTER V.

Drive to the White-house.—Anecdote of Mr. Jefferson and the British Ambassador.—Reception at General Jackson's.—The General's Conversation and Character.—The President's Prayer.—Anecdotes of General Jackson.—Reception by Mr. Van Buren.—Anecdote illustrative of Mr. Van Buren's Tact—his Character.—Character of the American Opposition.—Political Hypocrisy.—Mr. Calhoun.—Mr. Kendall.—Conclusion.

“There is no terror, Cassius, in your threats ;
 For I am arm'd so strong in honesty,
 That they pass by me, as the idle wind
 Which I respect not.”

Julius Cæsar, Act iv. Scene 4.

THE next day, at precisely ten o'clock, my friend called on me in a carriage; and, twenty minutes later, we arrived at the White-house. On the way thither he told me an anecdote of Mr. Jefferson, “the father of American democracy,” which I have since heard corroborated in a high quarter, and which I thought sufficiently amusing to write in my note-book.

Shortly after the commencement of the French revolution, when the general war threatened to

involve America as one of the belligerent parties, the noble Lord E—ne, then the Honourable Mr. E—ne, was sent out as envoy extraordinary and minister plenipotentiary of his British Majesty, in order probably to maintain the friendly relations existing between the cabinets of St. James's and Washington. The noble lord was then a young man, full of ardour and ambition, and devoted to the service of his country. He was, therefore, particularly anxious to make the best possible impression on Mr. Jefferson, whose party was then in the ascendant ; and accordingly determined on a splendid *début* of his diplomatic functions. A rich court uniform, beautifully embroidered with gold, was selected for the purpose, together with a most costly carriage of state ; and the servants of the ambassador shone in the richest and gayest livery ever beheld by Democrat or Tory in the Western world.

In this carriage, early on a fine morning, sat the envoy extraordinary and minister plenipotentiary, dressed in his rich court uniform, with his credentials in his hand, conning over his harangue on his drive to the American President. Having but a short distance to go, the carriage stopped at the White-house just as he had finished the rehearsal ; and, immediately after, one of his foot-

men jumped off, and made the usual English *tupage* at the door, which, being a novelty in America, did not fail to produce alarm and confusion among the inmates. Instead of one negro servant, two rushed forthwith to the door; but, dreading a popular tumult, did not dare open it, until a second rap, more dreadful than the first, proved the urgency of the case, and the necessity of performing their duty. One of them at last summoned courage, and, thrusting out his head without exposing his body, accosted the ambassador's footman in these terms:—

“Hallo! wat row are dat?”

The footman then explained that the Honourable Mr. E—ne, envoy extraordinary and minister plenipotentiary of his British Majesty, wished to wait upon his Excellency the President of the United States. This explanation made *Bacchus* so far recover from his fright as to induce him to open the door and admit the ambassador. *Jupiter*, the second servant, drew also near; and, gazing upon the rich uniform of the stranger,

“Bacchus,” said he, “wat are dat man so dun up for?”

Scarcely had the ambassador time to recover from his astonishment when he was ushered into a small room, containing the President's library;

the negroes going before him. There he waited some time, amusing himself with looking out of the window; one of the black imps having assured him that he would call “massa” immediately. At last Mr. Jefferson made his appearance, in his *robe de chambre* and slippers without heels. The Honourable Mr. E—ne was more perplexed than ever; but still trusting to his speech, and throwing himself into the most graceful attitude, he commenced.

“Mr. President!”

“Sit down, sir!” said Mr. Jefferson, pointing to a seat.

The ambassador continued unmoved.

“Sit down, sir! I pray you,” reiterated Mr. Jefferson, throwing himself into a large black leathern arm-chair; and the ambassador had to follow his example.

The effect of the harangue being thus wholly destroyed, the British envoy made the best of his hands and lungs. Vain effort! Mr. Jefferson remained impassible; crossing his legs, and from time to time throwing up his slipper, which with wonderful dexterity he always caught again at the point of his toe. At last, when the ambassador came to the end of his speech, in which he expressed the wish that the friendly relations

which had heretofore existed between his Majesty's Cabinet and the Government of the United States might continue without interruption, up goes the slipper nearly to the ceiling of the room, and down again on the President's toe, without the latter contracting a muscle.

"I hope," said my friend, as we were alighting from the carriage, "we shall not be received in this manner by General Jackson, who possesses, without exception, the most dignified manners of any man in the country.* He is a soldier, free from artifice and disguise; one of nature's noble-men, possessing more genuine politeness than nine-tenths of our fashionable people, who import their good-breeding from Europe. He is, in fact, a phenomenon in our country, which the present money-making generation cannot understand,—a living paradox in the eyes of our capitalists; aiming at the happiness of the people by destroying the National Bank,—a monster 'who would rather see commerce and credit perish than the constitution of the country!'"

"Is General Jackson at home?" asked the

* It is hardly necessary to remark, that Mr. Jefferson, who during his stay in Europe had ample opportunities of becoming acquainted with court fashion, affected this *nonchalance* for a political purpose.

senator of the Irish servant that opened the door.

“He is, sir.”

“Here is my card,” said I, “if you wish to announce me.”

“That is not necessary,” replied my friend; “every one can see the President.”

We walked up one pair of stairs, and, the General happening to be alone, were immediately admitted into his presence. On our entering the room, the General rose, and shook us both by the hand. He then asked us to sit down, and in a few minutes I felt more at my ease than I ever did in the house of an American broker. Understanding that I was a German, he told us, that while in North Carolina, not far from a number of “Dutch” settlements, he applied himself assiduously to the study of the German language; but, “moving” soon afterwards to the State of Tennessee, was obliged to give it up. “It is a fine language,” added he, “spoken by an honest people.” He then drew a picture of the German settlements, and of the Germans in general, which betrayed a knowledge of character I have not yet had the good fortune to discover in any of his political antagonists. From the Germans the conversation turned to the Irish, whose leading

features he traced with the same accuracy ; and so he went on discussing every set of emigrants, and at last the people of his own country. The sketch he gave of the last was excellent, and proved him to be thoroughly *master of his subject*.

After this, the senator, in order to draw him out, introduced various political topics, on which the General expressed himself without a moment's hesitation with the utmost determination and precision. It was as if every thought and principle he uttered had been fixed in his mind ever since he was born, and had never undergone a change up to the present period. Politics with him do not consist in a mere series of cold rules and maxims, in order to obtain a particular object ; he is an enthusiast, full of faith in the people and in the perfectibility of human nature, and deeply imbued with the purest religious sentiments. No abstract argument can drive him from his position, for he is nothing separate. He is a politician, a soldier, an enthusiast for the rights of the people, and a Christian at the same time. If the politician is convinced, there remain still the soldier, the enthusiast, and the Christian to be satisfied ; if the soldier is captured, there remains still the enthusiast ; and so on. He is always a whole ; head, heart, and

hand,—conception, determination, and action—being one and inseparable. Such men are always a riddle to the world, accustomed as the vulgar are to ascribe every signal success to a particular talent, or to this or that capacity, without ever considering the connection between mind and character.

Of General Jackson's enthusiasm I soon had an opportunity of satisfying myself. Miss Martineau being at that time in Washington, and having been overheard to make a remark at her boarding-house to this effect, "that it was really a wonder General Jackson succeeded against the United States' bank, considering that all the talent and the genius of the country were against him," my friend seized the opportunity to direct the General's attention to the peculiar manner in which British writers were accustomed to view his government. Upon this he rose from his chair, drew himself up to his full height, and, with his eyes flashing fire, remarked to the senator:—"You might have told her, sir, that all the *honesty* and *integrity* of the country were on *my* side." Then, without uttering another syllable, he resumed his seat, and was as friendly and agreeable as before.

Shortly after, an old man of the "far West"

entered the room. Jackson rose to salute him, but was told, almost in a sulky manner, "not to disturb himself, it being evident that he was engaged ;" and that the stranger, who wore boots, and a cloak with three capes, "would amuse himself, in the mean while, with looking on the pictures."

"Do so," said the General; but following him with his eyes, and perceiving him standing still before an engraving representing a battle fought in the revolutionary war, the thought seemed to strike him that the man, who was very old, might have been a revolutionary soldier.

"You are perhaps acquainted with the details of that battle?" said General Jackson, drawing near him.

"Indeed I am, sir," said the veteran; "I was myself engaged in it, and carried off a nice keepsake here on my left arm."

I do not remember what dialogue now ensued between the soldier and the General,—it was, indeed, too rapid for me to follow it; but I saw the old man, who at first answered the General sulkily, grow warmer and warmer, until at last he was actually moved to tears. He sternly gazed on the President's face; then, as if a sudden revolution had taken place in his mind, he turned round,

wished the General a good morning, and left the room. This man may have been an enemy to General Jackson's administration, who had come to see the President for no other purpose but to satisfy his curiosity ; but I am quite sure he left him with the determination to vote for him at the next election.

Our visit was soon again interrupted by the arrival of three gentlemen from the Northern States. They came to Washington to pay their respects to the President, who almost instantaneously recognised them as belonging to the opposition. His expressions and manners were remarkably guarded ; and, in a short time, he introduced the subject of manufactures. He inquired particularly into the method of cotton-spinning, and at least managed to keep them in good-humour. Soon after we all left together, and, in going down stairs, I heard one of the company say, " He would not be so bad a President after all, if he were not so d—d obstinate !"

" Well, sir," said the senator, as we were again seated in our carriage, " how do you like the President ?"

" He is, indeed, an extraordinary man !"

" And have you observed his talent in making himself beloved by all who come near him ? You

have probably seen him with his enemies; but you ought to see him when he is without restraint among his friends,—how, from pure benevolence, he just says to every man what is most agreeable to him!—how delicately he alludes to every little service rendered him!—how he remembers every act of kindness, every opinion expressed in favour of his measures,—and you would at once perceive the reason of his unparalleled popularity.

“ And then see him again in his cabinet,—explaining his political principles, and providing for the means of carrying them into effect,—always determined, never wavering on account of the doubts raised by his friends, and inspiring his own council with confidence in his measures,—and you would be convinced that General Jackson, so far from being influenced by his advisers, is himself the director of his cabinet, in which, perhaps, he rules with as much absolute power as any potentate in Europe. And yet, with all this *penchant* towards absolutism, what a staunch defender of democracy! the Wellington of our Liberals! and who knows but that Wellington, had he been born in America, would not have acted like Jackson; finding the democratic form of government the most legitimate, the most natural, and that which is sure to develope all the resources of the

country? Minds of the same tenor sometimes act very differently under different circumstances; and *he who in England is a strong Conservative, may in America, for very analogous reasons, be a sound Democrat.*

It was not long after my presentation at General Jackson's that I had the honour of taking tea with him; which gave me an opportunity of seeing him in his private circle. The invitation was given unceremoniously, just at the moment I was going to take leave of him. We passed into another room, where the company, consisting of his private secretary, his adopted son and his lady, and a gentleman who has since had an important influence on public affairs, were assembled round a small table, — Mrs. Jackson (the wife of his adopted son) doing the honours of the house. After each of us had taken the place assigned him by the lady, General Jackson rose, and with a loud and solemn voice, which bore the imprint of sincerity, thanked the Giver of all for His infinite mercy. The prayer was short, but impressive; and the example of his devotion had a visible effect on every individual present. Add to this, that General Jackson is a tall majestic-looking man, with a stern countenance, grey piercing eyes, and bushy white hair, that stands

almost perpendicularly on his head, leaving his large high forehead entirely free, and you will easily conceive the solemnity of the thanks'-offering of the American President.

One of the most characteristic anecdotes of General Jackson relates to the late difficulties between the Governments of the United States and France, when the King of the French seemed to insist on an apology from the President. This, as is well known, General Jackson peremptorily refused; and accordingly a cabinet council was convened in Washington, in which every member delivered his opinion according to his own manner, General Jackson listening to all with the utmost patience. There was the Secretary of State, not knowing how far a war with France would be supported by the people of the different States; the Secretary of the Treasury was already computing the deficit in the budget; the Secretary of the Navy thought it his duty to observe that the naval force of the United States was hardly capable of coping with that of the French; and at last came the Secretary of War, who alluded to the state of the army, a great portion of which was absorbed by the Indian campaign. General Jackson remained immovable. At last, when every one had finished, he rose; and, placing his

hand with some violence on the table, said in a solemn and firm voice: “ We have obtained judgment against the French King ; and, by the Eternal ! we must sue out the execution ! ” — “ But what if we meet with reverses ? The French will cut off our commerce ; they will arm privateers against our merchantmen ; and what if they attempt a landing ? ” — “ That ’s precisely the thing they will attempt,” observed General Jackson calmly ; “ and you may depend upon it we will give them a good drubbing.” This anecdote gave rise to a caricature, representing a French army, led by the Gallic cock, swimming across the Atlantic ; and General Jackson standing on the American shore with his cane drawn, and a numerous staff behind him, expecting their arrival. Another caricature, drawn after the settlement, representing General Jackson holding in his left hand a bag of money, with the figures 25,000,000 written on it, and in his right hand a cane, which he is shaking at Louis Philippe, with the words to his mouth, “ ’Tis well that you paid me, or, by the Eternal ! ” to which the King is represented bowing, and saying, “ Not another word of apology, my dear General ! ” has already been mentioned in another work.

The following fact, which was related to me

by Mr. Power, an American sculptor of much merit, now at Florence, is yet deserving a place in my note-book. When Mr. Power was last in Washington to take a bust of General Jackson, a friend observed to the artist that it would be impossible for him to give the right expression to the mouth, the General having lost his front teeth, which destroyed the expression of firmness about his lips; and that he had therefore better try to persuade the General to wear false teeth for one or two sittings. The artist, grateful for the hint, did not omit to ask General Jackson in a truly Western manner (Mr. Power was born and brought up in Cincinnati) whether he had ever worn false teeth? "I have," said the General; "but I am sorry for it."—"But had you not better put them in once more, to give me an opportunity of modelling the mouth; it would greatly enhance the effect."—"The *truth*, sir! the whole truth, and nothing but the truth!" exclaimed the General with a stern voice; "you have no right to represent me otherwise than I am."

What simplicity of character! and yet what energy and perseverance!

We drove from the White-house towards Georgetown; stopping at one of the houses,

called "The Seven Buildings." This was the dwelling of the Vice-President. My friend gave both our names, and in a moment after we were admitted into the presence of Mr. Van Buren. He received us in the same manner as General Jackson, only with less solemnity. His conversation was rapid, but concise and logical; his voice calm and steady, and his manners those of a perfect courtier. Understanding that I was a German, he introduced the subject of travelling, which gave him an opportunity of comparing the scenery on the Rhine with that of the Hudson, and pointing out the distinct beauties of each; which he did with more taste and less affectation than I had yet heard from an American when speaking of foreign countries. He gave the preference to his native river, and supported his opinion with such forcible arguments that he converted me to his doctrine. He then drew a parallel between the state of Europe and that of the United States; pointing to the advantages of the latter, to their government, the manners and customs of the people, and to their happiness. All this he did with so much gentleness, with such an entire absence of conceit, and such admirable management of terms, that it was impossible either to resist his eloquence or to be offended with his conclusions.

Our visit was interrupted by the arrival of several Western members, who, being alarmed at General Jackson's message in relation to the differences with France, desired to know whether it was the Vice-President's opinion that France would pay "without having a tug for it." Mr. Van Buren, without being for one moment embarrassed by this abrupt question, instead of an answer, took up a British periodical, the name of which I do not now recollect, but which treated the French-American question in a very sensible manner. From this he read to the members several passages, which expressed themselves favourably to General Jackson's policy; and at last the conclusion, which ran thus, "Jonathan has claimed the money, and Jonathan will have it." The members were delighted; and the conversation then passed to other topics. I mention this as an instance of Mr. Van Buren's tact, a quality full as indispensable to a statesman as a sound knowledge of politics.

"Well, and what do you think of our Vice-President?" asked my friend, as we were driving towards the lodgings of Mr. John C. Calhoun.

"I have certainly left him with the highest respect for his mind and character."

“And yet, sir! there are those who call him an *intrigant*, a ‘little magician,’ a ‘non-committal man,’ &c. though there is not one man in the country whose attachment to the democratic cause is better known or understood. The firmness of a man’s political principles is, in this country at least, always commensurate with the degree of abuse heaped upon him by the opposite party. Our people, I mean ‘the higher and better informed classes,’ are seldom inexorable with regard to a politician holding out some chances of conversion; but let a man’s character be established, and there is no end to their vituperation. This has happened to Mr. Van Buren, and ought to be considered by every democrat as a pledge of his fidelity.

“What act of Mr. Van Buren has ever had any other than democratic tendency? What principle did he ever advocate that was not strictly conformable to that doctrine? If he be a non-committal man, it must be that he never committed himself *to his enemies*.

“The reason why in America, more than in every other country, political controversies are personal, is, that the opposition, which in consequence of universal suffrage can only triumph by popular majorities, is obliged to apparently

uphold the principles maintained by the democracy ; so that, while it cannot make war upon the general doctrines of the administration, it is concentrating all its venom in its attacks on particular measures, and the men who support them. Let any Whig, either in or out of Congress, deny the correctness of this proposition, and, I say, he either does not understand our institutions, or he is wilfully disguising the truth. There is no other real distinction of parties in the United States, except that one really does or means to do what it says ; while the other is saying one thing, and preparing or hoping to be able to do another. There is more political hypocrisy in this country than perhaps anywhere else,—not among the people, but among ‘ the upper classes ;’ owing to the basis of our society being purely democratic, and the superstructure a lamentable imitation of the usages of Europe.

“ I know,” continued he after a pause, “ that no administration or set of men is without its political misconceptions and mistakes ; but have the opposition calculated how many of these are to be charged to their own account ? Into how many errors they force the administration by their reckless and indiscriminate resistance against all measures emanating from the executive ? And

do they not thus force the government to avail itself continually of 'the party' in carrying measures which ought to originate in calm reflection and sound statesmanship, and be applied in a generous spirit to all classes of society? The spirit of party is, indeed, at the basis of our institutions; an opposition we *must* have, and the peculiar nature of our government requires a powerful one; but most unfortunately our demagogues—Whigs and Democrats—oppose men, not principles. If there be a man in the country capable of acting as mediator between the two hostile parties,—appeasing the one without sacrificing the principles of the other,—that man is Mr. Van Buren; and future events will prove it."

We now halted before a small house in Pennsylvania Avenue, situated not far from the Capitol. This was the temporary residence of Mr. John C. Calhoun, senator from South Carolina. If the South, in general, have a right to be proud of the great number of eminent statesmen and orators who represent its interests in Congress, South Carolina in particular may glory in Mr. Calhoun. He is a statesman, not a lawyer; and perhaps the only senator in Congress whose course of reading was strictly adapted to the high functions he was to assume. When my friend

and I entered the room, he was stretched on a couch, from which he rose to offer us a warm Southern welcome. He almost immediately introduced the subject of politics, in which his superiority over my friend soon reduced the latter to the situation of a mere listener.

As he was explaining his views and theories, which, contrary to the usual American practice, he did in the most concise manner, and with a degree of rapidity which required our utmost attention to follow him, his face assumed an almost supernatural expression; his dark brows were knit together, his eyes shot fire, his black hair stood on end, while on his quivering lips there hung an almost Mephistophelean scorn at the absurdity of the opposite doctrine. Then, at once, he became again all calmness, gentleness, and good-nature, laughing at the blunders of his friends and foes, and commencing a highly comical review of their absurdities.

Mr. Calhoun is, without contradiction, the greatest genius in Congress, and secretly acknowledged as such even by his most declared political enemies. His speeches are the shortest, his political views the most elevated, his delivery the most impressive of any one of his colleagues; and he adds to all these qualities the most unsparing

irony. He was Vice-President at the commencement of General Jackson's administration; but subsequently joined the Whigs in order to oppose the tariff, *nullified* by his native State. Without this step, which destroyed his popularity in the North, he would, with very little opposition, have become General Jackson's successor in office. This alone proves the absurdity of the charge of unlawful ambition repeatedly brought against him. The Presidential chair of *the United States*, once within his reach, was assuredly a higher mark than the Presidency of "the *Southern Union*," the *bête noire* of the enlightened opposition. Mr. Calhoun has lately again joined the administration in its endeavour to separate itself from the banks; a short extract from his speech I have already presented in a previous note.

"You must yet see one of our most remarkable men," said my friend; "but I cannot take you to his house. You must see him at his office, where he is from five o'clock in the morning till late at night, always 'up and doing.' I mean the fifth auditor, Mr. Amos Kendall, who, according to the account of the opposition, has governed the country for the last six or eight years, and against whose genius their united

talents were unable to prevail. Mr. Kendall is a native of Massachusetts, and a graduate of Dartmouth College. He emigrated to Kentucky, where, like many New-Englanders, he was for a time employed as an instructor, and for a short time engaged as private tutor in Mr. Clay's family. He subsequently became editor of a paper, which is said to have revolutionised *the State*, and, inasmuch as the leading articles of one journal are copied into the others, *the whole country*."

"No man knows like Mr. Kendall how to address the people: his language is always popular, and yet concise; he never destroys the effect of a strong thought by spinning it out into a long sentence; and, above all, he avoids declamation. His style is forcible; because it convinces the people in their own way, instead of fatiguing them with laborious researches, or overwhelming them with the unfathomable pathos of a regular orator. He has shown to his political opponents that the various principles of democracy may be united into a system, and that that system may be maintained in practice by a government strong within and without."

At this moment our coach stopped at the entrance of the war department, and the next

minute we were ushered into the audience-chamber of the fifth auditor. He was at that moment talking to several people that besieged his office, without leaving off writing. When I was introduced to him, he made a slight motion forward, seizing me by the hand; but immediately sank back again into his chair with a seeming intention to recommence his labours. He spoke but a few words, principally by way of asking questions; and having ascertained who I was, what I sought, and what my opinions were, was evidently forming an estimate of my mind and character. While he was thus conversing with my friend and me, filling up the intervals with writing, I observed that he was equally watching the rest of the company; among whom I recognised an individual who I knew did not in his native place enjoy a very high reputation for industry, and who, to judge from Mr. Kendall's glances at him, had no particular chance of success in Washington.

Mr. Kendall's person is one of the most striking I ever beheld. He is of a spare frame, of rather less than middle stature, and, when walking or standing, inclines his body slightly forward. His face is pale, wearing the imprint of over-exertion; but his large eyes are full of animation, and his

forehead, the highest and broadest I ever saw, bespeaks the greatest intellectual power. His head, which indeed is one of the most extraordinary phrenological specimens, is of the most unusual size when compared to his body ; and it seems as if, by continual exertion of his intellectual faculties, his whole body had been made tributary to his brain. A man with Mr. Kendall's extraordinary powers of mind, and such indefatigable habits of industry,—calm, passionless, and endowed with the most unerring judgment,—must naturally be hated by his political antagonists ; though not even the most obstinate members of the opposition have as yet ventured to dispute his talents.

We did not remain long at the office ; but, on our way home, my friend finished the picture. “ You ought to see him in the centre of his family,” said he : “ what an excellent husband and father ! in his private intercourse how remarkably modest and unassuming ! He has indeed but one fault, which, however, is sufficient to damn him with our fashionable people : he is not fond of the dissipations of society, and does not give sumptuous entertainments.”

N. B. Mr. Kendall is now Postmaster-general, and as such a member of Mr. Van Buren's cabinet. Though in rank the last, he is known by

friend and foe to be the first in activity ; and his counsel is decisive with the most experienced men in Washington. Mr. Kendall commenced his political career not more than ten years ago with editing a small paper in the Western country ; and stands now foremost in the ranks of the most eminent statesmen of America. If he were a *parvenu* merchant or broker, he would be cited by the aristocracy as an example worthy of imitation ; but, having risen merely by his *talents* and his *pen*, the very mention of his name is offensive to the high-minded stock-jobbers in Wall and State streets.

In order to form a correct idea of the American government, it is absolutely necessary one should stay some time in Washington ; and frequent, not merely the fashionable society, but the company of those sturdy members of Congress, who, deputed from every part of the Union, actually represent the opinions, habits, and sentiments of the different sections of the country. During the session of Congress, Washington is the miniature picture of the United States ; enabling a stranger to form a better estimate of the character of the American people than many years' residence in different parts of the Union. The picture is

always complete, not a mere fragment, as is necessarily the case in any other city east or west of the Alleghanies. It is there one can take a correct view of the state of parties ; of the magnitude of the different interests, whether commercial, manufacturing, or agricultural ; and of the political prospects of the country.

One of the most amusing and instructive occupations is to contrast the representatives from the “ New States ” (the men that have not yet learned how to bow, and do not yet know what P. P. C. on a card means,) with the supple members from New York or Massachusetts, with their French and English civilization hanging loosely about them, like a garment not made for their use ; how the latter are striving for ascendancy, and how they are daily losing influence with those vigorous sons of the West, that reflect the genius and enterprise of a new world ! The West—not the East continually troubled with European visions—is ultimately destined to sway the country. The sea does not separate America from Europe ; but behind the Alleghanies is springing up a new life, and a people more nearly allied to the soil that nourishes them, than the more refined and polished population of the seaboard.

To sum up the whole : what is termed “ the

aristocracy of America"—that is, a considerable portion of all people worth from fifty to an hundred thousand dollars,—are, *owing to the growing power of the West*, a most harmless, though I cannot say “inoffensive,” part of the population. They live in houses a little larger than those inhabited by respectable mechanics, cover the floors of their parlours with Brussels carpets instead of Kidderminster, pay nine pence for beef which the labourer purchases for eight, pay a shilling more for a pound of tea, and keep a man-servant. Some of them keep a carriage, but by far the greater part are content with hackney-coaches. In point of accomplishment they are only inferior to the middle classes of Europe; but in pride and conceit they surpass the ancient nobility of the Holy Roman Empire and the thirty-four princes of the actual Germanic Confederation. This circumstance does not much add to their amiability, and does not in particular grace the boys and girls composing “the first society.” Some of them lay a great stress on family when it is joined to money; but, without this most indispensable requisite, *la vertu sans argent n'est qu'un meuble inutile*. It is, however, to be observed that property not only produces respectability, but also acts backwards on a man's ances-

try ; there being not one rich man in the United States,—foreigners excepted,—who is not descended from a respectable father and grandfather.

In politics they are the most implacable enemies to democracy ; which, with them, is synonymous with mob-government and anarchy. They are for a *strong* administration, made out of their own party ; and would hardly object to royalty, if the King would support himself out of his private chest. A court in Upper Canada, such as Lord Durham established there for a short time, would be a great attraction, and would undoubtedly cause many emigrations to Quebec. In all other respects their political opinions do not seriously differ from those of the mass of the people, except that they are for two trifling reforms in the *status quo*,—the introduction of an electoral census, and the re-establishment of the law of primogeniture. It is true that, had this reform been carried ten years ago, they would themselves be in the situation of those against whom these measures are now intended to be effectual ; but this is a matter of no consideration when compared to the good which would accrue from it to “ society.”

But it is not so much in America as in *Europe*

that the true character of the American aristocracy can be successfully studied. At home the vulgar clamour of the mob, and a few silly editors setting up for the representatives of public opinion, interfere too much with the display of their true sentiments. It is but in Europe—where they are relieved from these trammels — that they show the natural man, their *penchant* for the elegancies of society, their contempt for the poor, and their toad-eating to the higher classes, in which they even “beat the English.” It is there they sink the “American citizen,” in order to become noblemen without pedigrees, and courtiers without manners. I would therefore recommend to the next English tourist that is going to publish a work on “American Society,” to visit the courts of Italy and France rather than the United States. He will there find richer materials for a satire on American institutions than he would be able to discover from the State of Maine to Louisiana, and from the broad Atlantic to the Rocky Mountains. I am only able thus to throw out the hint, and leave the execution of the plan to a pen abler than my own.

LONDON :
PRINTED BY SAMUEL BENTLEY,
Bangor House, Shoe Lane.



